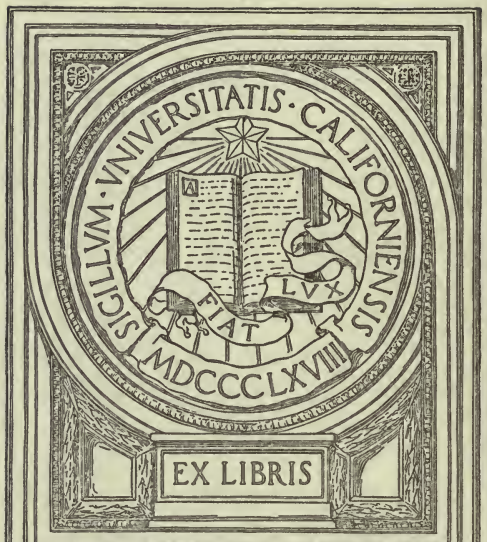
SIGILLVM · VNIVERSITATIS · CALIFORNIENSIS
FIAT LVX
MDCCCLXVIII
EX LIBRIS

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/feminineinfluence00hornrich

Feminine Influence on the Poets

By the Same Author

REST AND UNREST
ROSE ACRE PAPERS
THE SOUTH COUNTRY
THE HEART OF ENGLAND
LIFE OF RICHARD JEFFERIES
Etc.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Lady Venetia Digby.
(From the Painting by Vandyke)

Feminine Influence on the Poets

By

Edward Thomas

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

New York
John Lane Company
1911

905
T455

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

TO

A. MARTIN FREEMAN

Contents

		PAGE
I.	THE INSPIRATION OF POETRY	1
II.	WOMEN AND INSPIRATION	18
III.	WOMEN AS POETS	49
IV.	WOMEN, NATURE AND POETRY	65
V.	PASSION AND POETRY	91
VI.	MOTHERS OF POETS	120
VII.	POETS AND FRIENDLY WOMEN	135
VIII.	THE TENTH MUSE	228
IX.	PATRONESSES	332

List of Illustrations

LADY VENETIA DIGBY — *Frontispiece*
From the Painting by Vandyke

MARY SIDNEY, COUNTESS OF PEMBROKE — *Facing page* 96
From the Portrait by Mark Gerards

MRS. COWPER — „ 128
From the Portrait by D. Heins

DOROTHY SIDNEY, COUNTESS OF SUNDERLAND — „ 272
From the Portrait by Vandyke

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

Chapter One: The Inspiration of Poetry

"BY Heaven," says Biron in "Love's Labour's Lost," "I do love; and it hath taught me to rhyme and to be melancholy." By far the greatest part of the influence of women upon poetry has hitherto been of the unconscious kind; they have been the subject and the inspiration of many poems. In civilisations where the conscious intelligence of men treated women as altogether inferior, this was the only direct influence possible. In Greece, for example, it is clear that man saw in woman "no other end than to minister to his pleasure or to become the mother of his children." It is also clear that there must have been women to help Euripides to the liberal view expressed in the "Medea" and the "Alcestis," to his sympathy with "the dumb and age-long protest of the weaker against the stronger sex": who they were we shall never know. The position of women was not better in Rome, though here as everywhere, and at all times, a woman of magical or grand character could make her own world. The Roman father had the right to marry his daughter against her will and then to dissolve her marriage and take her away from husband, child, and

home. Christianity did little for women unless by an occasional resurgence of its democratic tendency. Asceticism and the exaltation of virginity smeared marriage with some contempt. Woman was the "door of hell" and "mother of all human ills" to the Fathers; and she was forbidden, says Lecky, to receive the Eucharist into her naked hands on account of her impurity. Nor does it appear certain that the worship of the Virgin Mother did much for women who could not become mothers without losing their virginity. The conditions of life were so harsh that an unearthly ideal may have been a necessary luxury, but undoubtedly the grass was not made to grow by contemplation of the stars. The living women of the Middle Ages could only gain power by separation from men in a monastic life, because in the contact of ordinary life they suffered by physical inferiority and lack of freedom.

It is not easy to exaggerate the misfortune of women under these conditions, because the evidence is practically all from men. Countless voices come to us out of the dark, but very few of the cries are from women. On the other hand it is likely that men, with the exclusive power of the pen, would underestimate or understate the powers of women. But great at all times those powers must have

been. Their legal and physical inferiority kept women down, but it kept them also together. They became a race apart. They were, in the words of Euripides, "a race well inclined to one another, and most safe in keeping secret matters of common interest." Women are still a race apart. They are foreigners, their world is another world, ever at hand, ever unavoidable, ever mysterious; and through this world is a man's nearest path to the strangeness of things. This is no small portion of their influence; and it must have been larger in Greece and Rome where men, no matter how superior, were yet born of women and trained by women. Pindar had his Corinna to instruct him in poetry, and Socrates his Diotima; and we may take these, with the feminine Muses and Sibyls, to be a parable. However inferior the woman, it was still sweet to be under one cloak with her, as the poet Asclepiades has said: "Sweet is snow in summer for one athirst to drink, and sweet for sailors after winter to see the crown of spring; but most sweet where one cloak hides two lovers, and the praise of Love is told by both." (Mackail's translation: "Select Epigrams from the Greek Anthology.") Men in those days were rather more like us than sometimes appears through learned spectacles, if I may draw any conclusion

from the appropriateness to a modern occasion of another Greek poet's "first kiss":

> At evening, at the hour when we say good-night, Moeris kissed me, I know not whether really or in a dream; for very clearly I now have the rest in mind, all she said to me, and all that she asked me of; but whether she has kissed me too, I am still to seek; for if it is true, how, once thus rapt to heaven, do I go to and fro upon earth? (Mackail.)

The Greek also agrees with the Provençal in calling the dawn a hater of lovers for rising so swiftly upon their couch—

> Ah God! Ah God, that day should come so soon!

It would not, therefore, be surprising if a Greek or Roman letter were some day to be discovered to match Byron's: "My first dash into poetry was as early as 1800. It was," he says, "the ebullition of a passion for my first cousin, Margaret Parker, one of the most beautiful of evanescent beings."

Love poetry can only exist where women have some freedom of choice, and where men therefore run the risk of refusal. When marriages are arranged, as in antiquity and the Middle Ages, by the parents, love poems are addressed only to courtesans and to women who have married some one else. Accordingly, love poetry has advanced with

the position of women, and in no branch of literature is the gain upon the ancients so positively great as in this. Here the influence of individual women is again and again apparent. They give the impulse and the subject. When the subject changes the impulse will remain, and the influence, though not easily definable, is not the less great. Buckle claimed for them an important part in the progress of knowledge, chiefly by encouraging in men deductive habits of thought. "Unconsciously," he says, "unconsciously, and from a very early period, there is established an intimate and endearing connection between the deductive mind of the mother and the inductive mind of her son. The understanding of the boy, softened and yet elevated by the understanding of his mother, is saved from that degeneracy towards which the mere understanding always inclines; it is saved from being too cold, too matter of fact, too prosaic." And not only is this relation to be found between mother and son, but between the feminine and masculine spirit at large. The turn of thought of women, "their habits of mind, their conversation, their influence, insensibly extending over the whole surface of society, and frequently penetrating its intimate structure, have, more than all other things put together, tended to raise us

into an ideal world, lift us from the dust in which we are too prone to grovel, and develop in us those germs of imagination which even the most sluggish and apathetic understandings in some degree possess." If the influence of the "more emotional, more enthusiastic, and more imaginative" sex has been great upon the progress of knowledge, it must have been very much greater upon poetry. Here was a more apt occasion for the exercise of that influence which M. Schuré attributes to Mathilde Wesendonck, Cosima Liszt, and Marguerite Albana, Wagner's friends. "The passion whose intoxication and travail they knew," says M. Schuré, "translated itself powerfully in the work of the man beloved. This is a kind of spiritual fecundation of the Eternal Masculine by the Eternal Feminine which is one of the highest functions of women." Speaking of their intellectual influence, M. Maulde la Clavière has said:

> You must not ask them to pry and delve into the stubborn heart of things; they look at the bright surface and penetrate what yields to the touch. And by this simple method they perceive things that escape the microscope, things that defy analysis, thanks to an intuitive impressionability which enables them to see rather than to know, and which would be wholly admirable if it were never misused. Further, they have a marvellous and mysterious

talent for expressing their enthusiasm; a phrase feelingly quoted by a lady strikes our mind with a quite peculiar force when we afterwards come upon it in the pages of a book.

"God," said Castiglione, "is only seen through women." M. Maeterlinck has expanded this opinion, saying:

> It would seem that women are more largely swayed by destiny than ourselves. They submit to its decrees with far more simplicity; nor is there sincerity in the resistance they offer. They are still nearer to God, and yield themselves with less reserve to the pure workings of the mystery. And therefore is it, doubtless, that all the incidents in our life in which they take part seem to bring us nearer to what might almost be the very fountain-head of destiny. It is above all when by their side that moments come, unexpectedly, when a "clear presentiment" flashes across us, a presentiment of a life that does not always seem parallel to the life we know of. . . . Women are indeed the veiled sisters of all the great things we do not see.

Richard Jefferies expresses the same thing in more earthly and intelligible manner when he exclaims in "World's End": "How delicious it is to see everything through the medium and in the company of a noble girl just ripening into womanhood."

The influence of women upon poetry began at a period beyond the reach of literary history. In folk poetry it was principally the woman

who sang, and our own ballads abound in beautiful evidence of this. A woman sings:

O waly, waly, but love be bonnie
A little time while it is new!
But when it's auld it waxeth cauld,
And fadeth awa' like the morning dew,

and ends:

But had I wist before I kiss'd
That love had been so ill to win,
I'd lock my heart in a case o' goud,
And pinn'd it wi' a siller pin.
Oh, oh! if my young babe were born,
And set upon the nurse's knee;
And I mysel' were dead and gone,
And the green grass growing over me.

A woman sings "The Lowlands of Holland," and "Fine Flowers in the Valley." "The Lament of the Border Widow" is one of the bravest of all: she sews her knight's sheet out in their woodland bower; she watches the corpse alone; she digs the grave alone; she fills it in alone—

But think na ye my heart was sair,
When I laid the moul' on his yellow hair?
O think na ye my heart was wae,
When I turn'd about, awa' to gae?

Nae living man I'll love again,
Since that my lovely knight is slain;
Wi' ae lock of his yellow hair
I'll chain my heart for evermair.

It is the woman that sings.

Mr. E. K. Chambers sees an explanation of woman's place as "the characteristic singer" in folk poetry in the fact that hers are "the greater number of the more leisured and rhythmical of the folk-occupations; and to her, the primitive sower of the seed and planter of herbs, has always been assigned the chief part in that persistent ritual of agriculture, at whose high seasons the festival excitement finds its ready outlet in the dance" and the accompanying song. So strong was this feminine tradition that the earlier form of art poetry—the songs of the minstrels, or *chanson populaire*—"invariably and in complete contradiction to the tone of the *chanson courtois* approaches love from the woman's point of view. The yearning, the surrender, the rapture, the endurance, the submission, the regret of woman's love; these are the arguments throughout of *chansons d'histoire*, of *aubes*, and of *refrains*."

What share women had in the composition of the now surviving ballads and songs cannot be shown. But it might fairly be contended that some, if not all, of the qualities in which they differ from the individual art poetry of England, especially after the Renaissance, are due largely to the influence of women and of the feminine tradition. And this means very much, not only on account of

the essential value of the ballads, but on account of their powerful part in the romantic revival which began with the appearance of Percy's "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry."

There is nothing finer in these ballads than the descriptions of women, the narratives of their actions, and the words they speak. The heroic and romantic figure of a woman is frequent. Such, above all, is the lady who defends her castle against Edom O'Gordon and his men; and when, to save her from the flames, she lets down her daughter over the wall, only to fall unhappily on the enemy's spear, he speaks in words exactly equal to Webster's, "Cover her face: mine eyes dazzle: she died young":

O bonnie, bonnie was her mouth,
  And cherry were her cheeks,
And clear, clear was her yellow hair,
  Whereon the red blood dreeps.

Then wi' his spear he turn'd her owre:
  O gin her face was wan!
He said, "Ye are the first that e'er
  I wish'd alive again."

He cam' and lookit again at her;
  O gin her skin was white!
"I might hae spared that bonnie face
  To hae been some man's delight.

"Busk and boun, my merry men a',
For ill dooms I do guess;—
I cannot look on that bonnie face
As it lies on the grass."

In this world of the ballads how bold, beautiful and tender the women are; and they seem to be as free as they are bold. Fair Janet, sitting at her needlework, no sooner wishes to be "in Carterhaugh, amang the leaves sae green," than she lets fall the needle and is away to Carterhaugh. Burd Ellen cuts her yellow locks "an inch above her e'e" and puts on a page's dress to run after her cruel mounted lover over land and water, though his child stirs in her womb; and "Young John's" mistress does the same and when he bids her turn back only cries:

"But again, dear love, and again, dear love,
Will ye never love me again?
Alas for loving you sae weel,
And you nae me again."

In the end both women achieve marriage with their lovers. Nothing could be more pitifully eloquent than the pleading of the betrayed Annie of Lochroyan, and though she is drowned through the cruelty of Lord Gregory's mother, she seems to triumph in death. Fair Catherine in the ballad of "Young Redin" shows how swift can be

a mistress's revenge. He tells her he is riding away to wed another: nevertheless, she bids him stay one night with her and gives him ale and wine, and out of her bed he never rises again until he is taken and thrown into the Clyde water. In "Little Musgrave and the Lady Barnard" there is an heroic adultress who, seeing her husband strike her lover dead and with the dagger bright in his hand, cries out:

"Although thou'rt dead, thou little Musgrave,
Yet I for thee will pray;
"And wish well to thy soul will I,
So long as I have life;
So will I not for thee, Barnard,
Although I'm thy wedded wife."

A strong mother is painted by the first verse of "The Wife of Usher's Well":

There lived a wife at Usher's Well,
And a wealthy wife was she;
She had three stout and stalwart sons,
And sent them o'er the sea.

When they come home their hats are made from a birch tree that grew "at the gates o' Paradise." She gets the fire lit and a feast laid, and when they are gone to bed she sits down at their bedside but falls asleep. The eldest brother says it is time to go because the cock crows, but the youngest replies:

"Lie still, lie still but a little wee while,
Lie still but if we may;
Gin my mother should miss us when she wakes
She'll go mad ere it be day.

"Our mother has nae mair but us;
See where she leans asleep;
The mantle that was on herself,
She has happ'd it round our feet."

He who looks for effects of this kind must go either to ballad poetry or to the poetry and fiction of the last hundred years. Perhaps the most remarkable of all is the ballad of four verses entirely about two women:

O Bessie Bell and Mary Gray,
They were twa bonny lasses;
They built a house on yon burn-brae,
And theek't it o'er wi' rashes.

They theek't it o'er wi' birk and brume,
They theek't it o'er wi' heather;
Till the pest cam' frae the neib'rin town,
And strack them baith thegither

They werena buried in Meffin kirkyard,
Amang the rest o' their kin;
But they were buried on Dornoch Haugh,
On the bent before the sun.

Sing, Bessie Bell and Mary Gray,
They were twa bonny lasses;
They built a bower on yon burn-brae,
And theek't it o'er wi' rashes.

Here the effect is made by the two girls in solitude, and without any mention or suggestion of a man.

Altogether these ballad women are a very noble company, worthy of a people that once fought under the command of women, and made sex no bar to rule, worthy of Cartismandua, Boadicea, Rowena, the Empress Helena and Bertha, and the poet's women, Esla, Rosmerta, Embla, Fridia, Corwen, Herfryd, and the rest, some bold, some tender, all of them beautiful and of high courage.

Could English poetry have been founded earlier upon the native ballad instead of upon conceited ceremonious and exotic work, it would not have spent two centuries in an almost exclusively masculine world. But there is very little English poetry in which the paternity—or, we should rather say, the maternity—of the folk ballad can be felt until we come to the more or less deliberate discipleship of the romantic movement. But, as Mr. Chambers has pointed out, the early English lyrics have often an honesty and naturalness which seem to link them to the folk song, while "The Nut-Brown Maid" of the fifteenth century has some clear connections both in spirit and in detail. The maid, for example, is willing to be kind to her lover's paramour, even as was the

mistress of Child Waters; the squire tells her she must cut short her kirtle and her hair, as Burd Ellen did; and she is willing to live an outlaw's life with him, though it is no maiden's part. The poem gives us a feeling of the perfect equality of the man and the maid, though the woman, indeed, "bears the brunt of the emotion," a fact which hints to Mr. Chambers of "an inspiration from folk song." Another piece of one verse—

> Western wind, when will thou blow,
> The small rain down can rain?
> Christ, if my love were in my arms
> And I in my bed again!

has more than a tinge of the ballad and song, "The Unquiet Grave," which begins:

> The wind doth blow to-day, my love,
> And a few small drops of rain;
> I never had but one true-love,
> In cold grave she was lain.

And this is a piece which is alive to-day in Somersetshire. (See "Folk Songs from Somerset." Edited by Cecil Sharp.) In many of the other mediæval lyrics can be felt the same crude and helpless truth which is so feminine; as if women were not light enough for the airy metaphysical love-poem that records the love not so much of mortal flesh

and spirit, but of love. Alisoun—of the well-known

> Between March and April
> When spray beginneth to spring—

Alisoun appears to be a real woman, both by her name and by her colouring—fair hair, brown eyebrows and black eyes. In "Lenten is come with Love to Town" and others the sounds and sights of the landscape are real and English enough. In some pieces the device is used of pretending to overhear a complaining maid. But already "the sentiment is individual, not communal," and the writer has the solitariness of the lover and the artist at the hour of composition. The women who can influence him are the mother that bore him, the maid he courts, his patron's lady, and any others whose beauty or sweet voices or kindness may serve in this or that way his spirit or sense. Being a man of learning he will also be affected by the idea of woman created by books and tradition. He will have learned that God's gifts to women are deceitfulness, weeping and spinning, that women's advice is often fatal, that it is worse to have a woman at rack and manger than to keep a horse idle in the stable, that woman is the confusion of man; and the Bible will have improved this wisdom. From Ovid, or nearer home, he

will have learned the indolence, the playfulness and the lusciousness of substitutes for love. Provençal poetry, which includes not one epithalamium, not one address to a marriageable lady, will have taught him the "great reserve" and the "essentially respectful style" due to the difference in social position between the patroness and the amorous troubadour, the elaborate ceremoniousness of fanciful relations between the sexes which "could only have been imagined in the artificial social conditions of courts, wherein it is possible for the real economic subjection of women to be glossed over with an appearance of consideration and respect." Through these conventions and traditions must the personality of some one woman pierce if life is to be granted to his poetry.

Chapter Two: Women and Inspiration

AS life has been refined and made secure, as the arts of life, and especially of indoor life, and of peace, have multiplied and developed, so women have drawn more and more level with men in many ways, and their voices have been more often and more clearly heard. But until recent times their voices have passed rapidly into silence, like those of the average man, except in so far as they have lived on in the enduring books of men. In this matter of their influence upon poets men have been by no means explicit, and only when letters and contemporary records begin to abound can we find much evidence that is not vague or conjectural.

Before looking at this evidence of the part played by women in the life of poets and the creation of poems, it is as well to give some examples of the relation between poetry and experiences in the external world. There are certainly many poems which are quite beyond the reach of any such evidence. They live themselves, and they enchain us, from beginning to end in their own unfleshly world; and supposing that some material circumstances were the seedground of the immortal

and ethereal flower, and that these circumstances were placed before us, we should be very little the wiser, nor probably could the poet himself offer us any help. There are, however, some poems which dwell in a middle world between this and the empyrean; these contain evidence of their origin within themselves. Of others chance or the self-consciousness of the modern poet has left us some explanation.

This is not the place for a consideration, even if such were profitable, of Poe's "Philosophy of Composition," where he shows us his manner of making "The Raven." In that astonishing essay Poe says that he prefers to begin composition with "the consideration of an effect." If he is speaking the truth it is wonderful that his effects should be so often good, since it is certain that effects are usually, perhaps always, beyond the calculation of the artist. Poe represents himself as choosing a subject deliberately which will help him to produce a certain effect, and all through the essay he keeps to his task of proving that nothing in the composition of "The Raven" is referable "either to accident or intuition." I instinctively distrust a man, whether Poe, De Quincey, or another, who speaks with such precision and emphasis; but no matter; the choice of this poem, "The Raven," as an

example is unfortunate, since it is so often absurd, and so often constructed with obvious and naked ingenuity, that the interest even of the perfectly credulous reader is only slight; and the fact that a man made a hundred and eight lines by a combination of the two ideas, "of a lover lamenting his deceased mistress and a Raven continuously repeating the word 'Nevermore,'" brings us little nearer to understanding the growth of the poem. We must be content with evidence far less lucid and complete than Poe's.

One of the best and most interesting of Milton's Latin elegies is the seventh, written in his nineteenth year. Until then, says the poem, love had been not only unfelt by him but contemptible. Cupid threatened, therefore, to overthrow him and to be revenged. The poet, ignorant of this, was walking out upon a May-day through the suburbs of London and out into the country. Many beauties passed him and were passed, and they seemed to him no less than goddesses, and he was pleased with the sight. In the first elegy also he had praised these beauties of the London parks and gardens. But one there was among these at sight of whom he became all one flame of love, as she was the lovely and unconscious haunt of love, upon lashes, cheeks, and lips. Like the others she

passed him by. She disappeared never to return, and he felt torn apart from her. He could not dismiss her from his mind, nor yet pursue her. If only he could once see the features of the beloved; if they should meet again, oh! that one arrow should transfix their two hearts at once. Eighteen years afterwards Milton sent this poem to the printer, and he appended ten stern lines of censure upon this monument of his youthful folly. In spite of this the walk was not forgotten, and many years later, when he wished to say how beautiful Eve seemed to Satan, it returned to his vision, and along with it perhaps the very look of the London girl:

As one who, long in populous city pent,
Where houses thick and sewers annoy the air,
Forth issuing on a summer's morn, to breathe
Among the pleasant villages and farms
Adjoined, from each thing met conceives delight—
The smell of grain, or tedded grass, or kine;
Or dairy, each rural sight, each rural sound—
If chance with nymph-like step fair virgin pass,
What pleasing seemed for her now pleases more,
She most, and in her look sums all delight:
Such pleasure took the Serpent to behold
This flowery plat, the sweet recess of Eve
Thus early, thus alone. Her heavenly form
Angelic, but more soft and feminine,
Her graceful innocence, her every air
Of gesture or least action, overawed
His malice, and with rapine sweet bereaved
His fierceness of the fierce intent it brought. . .

Of the same order was Charles Lamb's love for the young Quaker, Hester Savory. Writing to Manning a few months after her marriage and early death, he said that he had been in love with her for some years while he lived at Pentonville, though he had never spoken to her in his life. With the letter he sent the poem written upon her death, "When maidens such as Hester die."

Keats' sonnet, "Time's sea hath been five years at its slow ebb," was written five years after he was "tangled in the beauty's web" of a lady whom he saw only once for a few moments at Vauxhall.

There is also an anonymous Elizabethan poem in praise of a lady seen and loved in passing by:

> There is a lady sweet and kind,
> Was never one so pleased my mind.
> I did but see her passing by,
> And yet I love her till I die.

It is possible that Burns' "Mally's meek, Mally's sweet" records a similar meeting—

> As I was walking up the street,
> A barefit maid I chanc'd to meet;
> But O, the road was very hard
> For that fair maiden's tender feet—

though it was perhaps Burns' way to turn

round in time to make the best of such a meeting.

Burns' letters give some intimate proof of the origin of certain poems in a personal experience. When he was thirty-three he wrote to Mrs. Dunlop saying that he was in love:

> But the word Love, owing to the *intermingledoms* of the good and the bad and the pure and the impure, in this world, being rather an equivocal term for expressing one's sentiments and sensations, I must do justice to the sacred purity of my attachment. Know, then, that the heart-struck awe; the distant humble approach; the delight we should have in gazing upon and listening to a Messenger of Heaven, appearing in all the unspotted purity of his celestial home, among the coarse, polluted, far inferior sons of men, to deliver to them tidings that make their hearts swim in joy, and their imaginations soar in transport—such, so delighting and so pure, were the emotions of my soul on meeting the other day with Miss Lesley Baillie, your neighbour at Mayfield.

She and her sister were on their way to England with their father, and Burns—"though God knows I could ill spare the time"—rode fourteen or fifteen miles with them. He left them at about nine, and riding home composed the ballad beginning:

> O saw ye bonie Lesley,
> As she gaed o'er the Border?

In a later letter he speaks of riding with her

"out of pure devotion, to admire the loveliness of the works of God, in such an unequalled display of them," and he says explicitly that he made the ballad during the ride home: "In galloping home at night, I made a ballad on her." But the two stanzas which he sent as a specimen are not metrically or verbally the same as those afterwards printed.

Burns called "Bonie Lesley" a "parody" of a certain old ballad. Probably the form and melody of this ballad were in his head as he rode thinking of Lesley Baillie. To the composition of "Blythe hae I been on yon hill" we know that music and a woman both contributed, and that woman was the same Lesley Baillie. The song was suggested by the slow playing of "The Quaker's Wife" upon the oboe, which charmed Burns to enthusiasm so that he "made a song for it"; but he says later on that it is "composed on a young lady, positively the most beautiful lovely woman in the world." In this same note he adds that he purposes giving Thomson "the name and designation" of all his heroines to appear in a future edition of the songs, "perhaps half a century hence." Of "How can my poor heart be glad" he tells Thomson that he made it on the evening of August 29, 1794, as he was straying out and

thinking of the tune of "O'er the hills and far away." He relates that "O were my love yon lilac fair" was founded upon an old verse:

> O if my love was a bonny red rose,
> And growing upon some barren wa',
> And I myself a drap of dew,
> Down in that red rose I would fa'.

He thought this too short for a song. Often he tried to add a stanza to it, but in vain. At length "after balancing myself for a musing five minutes on the hind-legs of my elbow-chair I produced this song." This must call to mind the letter to Thomson where he complains that he cannot get on with a song to the tune of "Laddie lie near me":

> I do not know the air; and until I am complete master of a tune in my own singing (such as it is), I never can compose for it. My way is: I consider the poetic sentiment correspondent to my idea of the musical expression and then choose my theme, and begin one stanza; when that is composed, which is generally the most difficult part of the business, I walk out, sit down now and then, look out for objects in nature around me that are in unison or harmony with the cogitations of my fancy, and workings of my bosom; humming every now and then the air, with the verses I have framed. When I feel my muse beginning to jade, I retire to the solitary fireside of my study, and there commit my effusions to paper; swinging at intervals on the hind-legs of

my elbow-chair, by way of calling forth my own critical strictures, as my pen goes on. Seriously this, at home, is almost invariably my way.

"Craigieburn Wood" was "composed on a passion which a Mr. Gillespie, a particular friend of mine, had for a Miss Lorimer, afterwards a Mrs. Whepdale. The young lady was born in Craigieburn wood." The chorus—

> Beyond thee, dearie, beyond thee, dearie,
> And O, to be lying beyond thee!
> O, sweetly, soundly, weel may he sleep
> That's laid in the bed beyond thee!—

is part of "an old foolish ballad" says Burns.

We know still more of the origin of Wordsworth's poems, thanks to his sister Dorothy's journal and his own notes. The lines "To a Butterfly," for example, were written at breakfast-time on a Sunday—March 14, 1802. "The thought first came upon him," says the sister, as they were talking about the pleasure they both always felt at the sight of a butterfly, recalling how she chased them but did not catch them for fear of brushing the dust off their wings, while the poet killed all the white ones when he went to school "because they were Frenchmen." Wordsworth ate nothing at breakfast, but sat "with his neck unbuttoned, and his

waistcoat open while he did it." Her journal contains the material of the poem beginning "She had a tall man's height or more," and called "Beggars." After tea she read out from her journal the account of the little boy and the tall woman, "tall much beyond the measure of tall women," who had called at the door while the poet was away. Wordsworth could not put the incident out of his mind, and he went tired to bed, leaving the poem unfinished, though in a walk from Rydal he had got "warmed with the subject" and half cast it. The next day he finished the poem before he got up at nine. Before writing "The Thorn" he had observed on a stormy day for the first time a thorn upon the ridge of Quantock Hill which he had many times passed by. He then said to himself: "Cannot I by some invention do as much to make this thorn permanently an impressive object as the storm has made it to my eyes at this moment?" It was his wish to show the manner in which a superstitious man—such as a retired captain of a small trading vessel past middle age—cleaves to the same ideas. "I had," he says, "two objects to attain; first to represent a picture which should not be unimpressive, yet consistent with the character that should describe it; secondly, while I adhered to the style in

which such persons describe, to take care that words, which in their minds are impregnated with passion, should likewise convey passion to readers who are not accustomed to sympathise with men feeling in that manner or in any such language. It seemed to me that this might be done by calling in the assistance of lyrical and rapid metre. It was necessary that the Poem, to be natural, should in reality move slowly; yet I hoped that, by the aid of the metre, to those who should at all enter into the spirit of the Poem, it would appear to move quickly."

It is not surprising that the origin of "Alice Fell" is a story told to the Wordsworths by a friend in a manner differing only from the poem in its brevity and prose form. The sonnet, "I saw the Figure of a Lovely Maid," exactly describes a dream in which his daughter appeared to him. It was composed on the middle road between Grasmere and Ambleside, begun and ended, word for word as it now stands, before he came in sight of Rydal: which, he says, was unusually rapid and straightforward composition. Another slight poem, "Foresight," had its origin in Dorothy's remark: "When I was a child I would not have pulled a strawberry blossom." Wordsworth all but finished the poem that day. It kept him long

off his dinner, as better poems did. The sister's reading aloud of Milton's sonnets in 1801 brought home to him more impressively than before their "dignified simplicity and majestic harmony." He took fire, to use his own words, and wrote three sonnets the same afternoon, one of them being "I grieved for Buonaparte." In the case of "Lucy Gray," there are two sets of evidence concerning its origin. The story was told by his sister, of a little girl bewildered in a snow-storm near Halifax in Yorkshire. His object was to exhibit solitude poetically, and he himself says that "the way in which the incident was treated, and the spiritualising of the character might furnish hints for contrasting the imaginative influences which I have endeavoured to throw over common life with Crabbe's matter-of-fact style of treating subjects of the same kind."

The "Lines to a Butterfly" was not the only poem which kept Wordsworth from his meals. He begged the pardon of his wife and sister for similar transgressions all through their life together. The labour of composition was exacting, and often led to complete exhaustion. When writing "The White Doe of Rylstone," his heel had been rubbed sore by too tight a shoe, and he observed that "the irritation of the wounded

part was kept up, by the act of composition, to a degree that made it necessary to give his constitution a holiday." He was writing this poem in rough weather at the close of 1807, and he used to walk up and down pouring out his verses aloud in a field where a row of stacks lent him shelter. The mood exquisitely favourable to poetic conception and gestation as distinguished from parturition, for Wordsworth, and probably for many another, is the subject of one of his finest sonnets:

Most sweet it is with unuplifted eyes
To pace the ground, if path be there or none,
While a fair region round the traveller lies
Which he forbears again to look upon:
Pleased rather with some soft ideal scene,
The work of Fancy, or some happy tone
Of meditation, slipping in between
The beauty coming and the beauty gone.
If Thought and Love desert us, from that day
Let us break off all commerce with the Muse:
With Thought and Love companions of our way,
Whate'er the senses take or may refuse,
The Mind's internal heaven shall shed her dews
Of inspiration on the humblest lay.

The poet walked as much as possible out of doors: which reminds me that Lord Bacon used to say sweet herbs and flowers refreshed his memory, and on an April day would ride out to enjoy the rain which he considered wholesome "because of the nitre

in the air and the universal spirit of the world"; he would often have music near where he was meditating.

As late as 1833, only a year before his death, Coleridge said that he could write as good verses as ever he did if perfectly free from vexation and within easy reach of as much fine music as he liked, which, he added, "has a sensible effect in harmonising my thoughts and in animating and, as it were, lubricating my inventive faculty." He told Hazlitt that he liked to compose in "walking over uneven ground, or breaking through the straggling branches of a copse-wood." Coleridge at his best is as disdainful of the pursuit of bipeds as any poet, though it is well known that even "Christabel" contains two phrases almost straight from Dorothy Wordsworth's journal. One of these is the well-known—

> The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
> That dances as often as dance it can,

which is to be found in the journal thus: "One only leaf upon the top of a tree—the sole remaining leaf—danced round and round like a rag blown by the wind." He wrote, however, several verses upon definite occasions, such as the sonnet upon receiving the news of his first infant's birth. But of "Kubla

Kahn" and "The Ancient Mariner" also there are some explanatory details known. In the summer of 1797, at a lonely farmhouse, Coleridge fell asleep under the influence of opium just as he had read the words of Purchas:

> In Xamdu did Cublai Can build a stately Palace, encompassing sixteen miles of plain ground with a wall, wherein are fertile Meddowes, pleasant Springs, delightful Streams, and all sorts of beasts of chase and game, and in the middest thereof a sumptuous house of pleasure.

The poet says that he slept for three hours "during which time he has the most vivid confidence, that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as *things*, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort." On waking he wrote down the fifty-four lines which survive. Some one called on business, and he could afterwards recall no more except "some eight or ten scattered lines and images." From these fragments he could never integrate the whole. "The Ancient Mariner," he said, was founded on a friend's dream of a skeleton ship with figures in it. Wordsworth suggested that the mariner

should have killed an albatross and suffer from the vengeance of the tutelary spirits of the South Sea; and also that the ship should be navigated by dead men. This was as the two were walking over the Quantocks towards Watchet from Alfoxden. Composition was begun that evening, Wordsworth contributing the phrase "long and lank and brown as is the ribbed sea-sand," the stanza beginning "He holds him with his glittering eye," and some other lines now unknown. The poem was part of the plan of the Lyrical Ballads formed between the two poets, and Coleridge was to work upon "persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith." Thus Coleridge's temper and imagination, the dream of his friend, the suggestion of Wordsworth, the memory of the gravest ancient ballads, and the concerted plan of the two poets all melted into one power which brought forth "The Ancient Mariner."

Byron puts his own case for us, as we should expect, in a clear downright manner. He is writing to Moore in 1816 in reply to a request for a dirge upon a dead girl. "But

how," he asks, "can I write on one I have never seen or known?" He could not write upon anything without a personal experience and foundation. Ten years earlier, when he was eighteen, he had said the same thing in a plangent effusion upon "The First Kiss of Love" written in the depth of winter:

I hate you, ye cold compositions of art,
  Though prudes may condemn me, and bigots reprove;
I court the effusions that spring from the heart,
  Which throbs, with delight, to the first kiss of love.

All but everything he writes is perfectly substantial and at blood heat. He never makes us lift more than one foot out of this very world of every day. Whatever is said, acted or described, hints at the immediate parentage of actual life as it was in the years between 1788 and 1824.

A very clear and vivid instance of inspiration is recorded of John Clare. On the first night of walking home with Martha Turner, afterwards his wife, he said good-bye to her at the door, and waited about, watching the lights of her home, for an hour or two. He then set out on the return, but lost his way in the darkening night and sat down upon a haystack in contentment to write a love-song in the light of the new-risen moon. For

long he wandered across country without finding his way, until he lay down exhausted, and awoke to find himself at the edge of a deep canal until that moment unguessed.

Keats does not pretend to be so obvious as Byron. The sonnet beginning "It keeps eternal whisperings around" appears to have sprung out of a nervous mood, due to insufficient rest and to the haunting effect of a passage in "King Lear"—"Do you not hear the sea?" This was at Carisbrooke in April 1817. At Teignmouth in January 1818, he sat down to read "King Lear" once again: the play "appeared to demand the prologue of a sonnet," and he wrote it before beginning to read. The sonnet may still be seen in Keats' copy of the Shakespeare folio of 1808. It is the one beginning:

> O golden tongued Romance with serene Lute!
> Fair-plumed Syren, Queen of far-away!
> Leave melodizing on this wintry day,
> Shut up thine olden volume and be mute.

Before telling his brothers of this sonnet he says that he thinks a little change has lately taken place in his intellect; he can no longer give himself up to passiveness, but must be interested and employed; and he quotes the sonnet as an example of the benefit of "a very gradual ripening of the intellectual powers"

for the purposes of great productions. Which must mean that the ferment in his brain came to a head unsought and unexpected upon the opening of "King Lear." Mr. W. M. Rossetti says almost the same of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. He wrote after fits of apparently indolent brooding, "out of a large fund or reserve of thought and consideration, which would culminate in a clear impulse or (as we say) in inspiration." Wordsworth is certain that all good poetry is written in this way. He says:

> All good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; and though this be true, poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who, being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply. For our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings; and, as by contemplating the relation of those general representatives to each other we discover what is really important to men, so, by the repetition and continuance of this act, our feelings will be connected with important subjects, till at length, if we be originally possessed of much sensibility, such habits of mind will be produced, that, by obeying blindly and mechanically the impulses of those habits, we shall describe objects, and utter sentiments, of such a nature, and in such connection with each other, that the understanding of the Reader must necessarily be in some degree enlightened and his affections strengthened and purified.

Another instance of the still and stealthy growing of a poem is Keats' "To a Nightingale," written at Hampstead in the spring of 1819. He had often enjoyed the singing of a certain nightingale, and one morning after breakfast went out and sat under a plum-tree near its nest for two or three hours. He returned with a full rough draft of the Ode; and this rapid execution has led a modern artist to represent the poet sitting down to compose with the words "To a Nightingale" already at the top of the paper. Writing in September 1819, Keats tells Reynolds how surprisingly pleasant it is to him to be alone in the tranquillity of Winchester in autumn. "How beautiful the season is now," he remarks; "how fine the air—a temperate sharpness about it. Really, without joking, chaste weather—Dian skies—I never liked stubble-fields so much as now—Aye, better than the chilly green of the spring. Somehow, a stubble-field looks warm—in the same way that some pictures look warm." And so after his Sunday's walk he composed the "Ode to Autumn." Yet both just before and just after this he was perplexed by his own affairs, by his love for Fanny Brawne, by the ill-health of his brother George, and he had given up "Hyperion." But his own health had improved, and he found the air on St.

Catherine's Hill "worth sixpence a pint." And after his "half comfortable sullenness" in the midst of perplexities, after trying to wean himself from his too wild passion, "The Ode to Autumn" emerged, a landscape that is the very picture of his mind. Although he once said that the only thing that could affect him for more than a passing day was a doubt of his powers for poetry, although in his sublime solitude he seemed to live not in this world alone "but in a thousand worlds" of his strengthening imagination, yet he made this resolution, in a letter to Haydon of March 1819, "Never to write for the sake of writing or making a poem, but from running over with any little knowledge or experience which many years of reflection may perhaps give me." Otherwise he will enjoy his great conceptions in dumbness and without "the trouble of sonneteering." "I will not," he says, "I will not spoil my love of gloom by writing an Ode to Darkness!"

Shelley is still harder to track. We know, for example, that the "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" was conceived during his voyage round the Lake of Geneva with Byron, and that it was composed—he says himself—"under the influence of feelings which agitated me even to tears"; and that it refers in a

heightened manner to his boyhood and to a climacteric ecstasy in the presence of the "Spirit of Beauty." "Alastor" seems to have been inspired by nothing so much as by his long delighted voyages upon the rivers of Europe, of England, and of the imagination; "I have sailed," he says with a thrill in the preface to "The Revolt of Islam," "I have sailed down mighty rivers, and seen the sun rise and set, and the stars come forth, whilst I have sailed night and day down a rapid stream among mountains." His familiarity from boyhood with "mountains and lakes and the sea, and the solitude of forests" he regards as among the circumstances favourable to the education of a poet. To this he adds that he has seen populous cities and the passions of their multitudes, that he has seen the theatres of tyranny and war, that he has conversed with living men of genius, that "the poetry of ancient Greece and Rome, and modern Italy, and our own country, has been to me, like external nature, a passion and an enjoyment." And from such sources have been drawn "the materials for the imagery" of his poem. Six months of unremitting ardour and enthusiasm were occupied by the composition and such revision as would not sacrifice newness and energy of imagery and language; the thoughts were

gathered in as many years. Of "Prometheus Unbound" he tells us that it was written upon the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla; the "inspiration" of the drama was "the bright blue sky of Rome, and the effect of the vigorous awakening spring in that divinest climate, and the new life with which it drenches the spirits even to intoxication." Led on to discuss poetry and its nature, he calls a poet "the combined product of such internal powers as modify the nature of others; and of such external influences as sustain these powers."

Shelley's letters show us portions of the process of dissolving the objects of the outward and visible world into the poet's inner life, so as to form if not a complete and consistent new world there, yet one of great significance which can only die with his poetry. No one can read the letters describing the scenery of the Alps without feeling that the forms are entering the poet's brain in such a way that they are certain of this new life. Nor is this because we may happen to connect some of these descriptions with Asia's song in the second act of "Prometheus," with these lines in particular:

> We have pass'd Age's icy caves,
> And Manhood's dark and tossing waves,
> And Youth's smooth ocean, smiling to betray.

Shelley himself appears to have been partly conscious of these processes. He says that the scenery "will haunt his talk"; that rivers "imitate mind, which wanders at will over pathless deserts"; and later that "the curse of this life is that whatever is once known can never be unknown. You inhabit a spot which before you inhabit it is as indifferent to you as any other spot upon earth, and when, persuaded by some necessity, you think to leave it, you leave it not; it clings to you—and with it memories of things, which, in your experience of them, gave no such promise, revenges your desertion." One of his friends said that Shelley spent his life in searching for green. His letters of description are full of references to lawns among woods—"lawns of such verdure as I have never seen before," and so on—and it appears that his lawns are meaning more to him than to a merely æsthetic observer; if I say that they are symbolic I shall explain nothing, but I may suggest something of the truth. In some of the earliest poems it may be seen that he is using images—"the grave" and "the mist on the heath" for example—not yet so as to make effective poetry, but so as to hint at least of that inner world of images which was afterwards to gain perfect expression. The "charnel" is another of those

images that lay imperfectly articulated and understood in his mind long after he wrote to Hogg of "the damp, unintelligent vaults of a charnel house." There are passages where he shows that as yet some of these images had only an allegorical force, as when he wrote:

> We shall then meet in Wales. I shall try to domesticate in some antique feudal castle whose mouldering turrets are fit emblems of decaying inequality and oppression, whilst the ivy shall wave its green banners above like Liberty, and flourish upon the edifice that essayed to crush its root. As to the ghosts, I shall welcome them, although Harriet protests against my invoking them. But they would tell tales of times of old, and it would add to the picturesqueness of the scenery to see their thin forms flitting through the vaulted charnels.

They are allegorical, but they may become symbolical. Here, as elsewhere, is introduced the influence of other minds, such as Ossian's, in changing a visible object before it is put into the alembic of the spirit. Dr. Lind, the strange benevolent physician whom Shelley knew at Eton, was changed into the majestic mythical figure of the Hermit in "The Revolt of Islam," and in "Prince Athanase" into the "old, old man with hair of silver-white," the wise Zonoras. We may smile when he tells Miss Hitchener that she is "a thunder-riven pinnacle of rock amid the rushing tempest

and the boiling surge," but the image is real and destined to survive this application. So, too, when he writes to Mary Godwin, "Would it not be better, my heavenly love, to creep into the loathliest cave so that we might be together?" And in the next paragraph, "My mind, without yours, is dead and cold as the dark midnight river when the moon is down." These are more than comparisons; they have an intenser life than life itself as it is commonly lived. When he writes that the wind is abroad and "the leaves of the forest are shattered at every gust," I feel that the wind is already a spiritual wind such as he afterwards invoked to "drive his dead thoughts over the universe," and that already "the imagination has breathed into the most inanimate forms some likeness of its own visions," as he says, in describing the calm lake of Geneva at evening.

Shelley sometimes, perhaps often, wrote under "the immediate impression of the deep and powerful feelings excited by the objects" which he attempts to describe. These are the words he uses about his "Mont Blanc." "As an undisciplined overflowing of the soul," he continues, "it rests its claim to approbation on an attempt to imitate the untamable wildness and inaccessible solemnity from which these feelings sprang." Again,

"The Ode to the West Wind," was "conceived and chiefly written" in a wood near Florence "on a day when that tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and animating, was collecting the vapours that pour down the autumnal rains." He wrote "Ariel to Miranda" out of doors, and the manuscript was like "a sketch of a marsh overgrown with bulrushes," being so full of corrections that only a few lines floated whole in the wreckage of a page of writing. This is a description which calls to mind those steps in composition which have been concealed, thought Poe, by "authorial vanity." They would, he pretended to think, shudder at letting the public peep at "the elaborate and vacillating crudities of thought—at the true purposes seized only at the last moment—at the innumerable glimpses of ideas that arrived not at the maturity of full view—at the fully matured fancies discarded in despair as unmanageable—at the cautious selections and rejections—at the painful erasures and interpolations . . ." There is some evidence that Shelley was not always as successful as in the "Ode to the West Wind," when his composition followed close upon experience. Thus he abandoned in the midst his verses on his dead child, Clara. Others of the fragments may have been left through a similar

precipitancy, such, for example, as "O Mary dear." "Julian and Maddalo" is one of his few poems that are of the same substance as the facts from which they sprang, a *sermo pedestris* he calls it himself. The original of the garden of "The Sensitive Plant" was the Pisan garden of his friend Lady Mountcashell. It was, says Medwin, "as unpoetical a place as could be well imagined." The source of the poem's inspiration was Lady Mountcashell herself, a tall blue-eyed lady of a lofty and calm presence, who was everything that was amiable and wise. A year later Jane Williams was agreed by all to be the exact antitype of the lady in "The Sensitive Plant." The fact was that the exact antitype existed in Shelley's brain, and there only. A real thing or a real person could be no more to him than a new entrance into the enchanted solitude of his own soul.

From several modern poets, whom I am not alone in admiring, I have had letters giving some indication of the connection between certain poems and certain facts in experience. One sends me a chain of love-songs and sonnets where the wild flames flicker still above the calm glow of the verse. None of these, he says, represents emotion remembered in tranquillity. They were written "out of emotion as white hot as his

nature was capable of." Some were composed in the very presence of the inaccessible beloved, others within a few days after an everlasting farewell. Another whom I should like to reveal, that I might by quotation add some to the too few who know his work, says that one of his lovely portraits of women was "based on Beardsley's illustration of one of Chopin's Ballades." Another poem is "a kind of medley hung round, I should think, some childish memory, probably of a sister; possibly in one of the quite still, absorbed, all-eyes moments little children have." One poet will say no more than that "a subject must be not only lived but re-lived, before it can be written about, and it is the re-living that makes the poem," and this re-living may be prolonged over many years or a few minutes. Coleridge says the same thing, speaking of the rule that the artist must first put himself at a distance from Nature "in order to return to her with full effect," because mere painful copying would produce only "masks, not forms breathing life." A fourth writes to me of his love-poems: "I never write a love-poem," he says, "but what I have some real woman in my mind; either one I have met in the past or one I meet now, and whose looks I like. Perhaps the woman that has affected me most was one I met on

the Thames Embankment, whom I had never met before and have not seen since. I followed her about for a considerable time, and noticed that every one, no matter of what age or station in life, stared hard at her. Her own apparent indifference gave them a good chance to do this. It was with much disappointment that I at last came to the conclusion that she had nothing to do with me and let her pass out of sight. I was thinking of that woman when I wrote ——." He continues: "The poem called —— was written after hearing a woman, whom I had taken a fancy to, laughing a welcome to another. It was the sweetest laugh that I have ever heard, beginning quite merrily and ending in a sweet sad fall that died away softly." Again: "The poem called —— was written from the memory of how a bird at home used to burst out singing when he heard my sister's voice. And yet it was always I that fed him, and in fact troubled myself so much about his life and comfort that my sister was jealous and wished him dead." One writer seems to contradict what Coleridge says by the statement that what he has done best was done under the almost crushing weight of painful memory, and fearful expectation which it described. But the truth probably is that even here the same ripening took place, but with fierce

rapidity, as flower seeds hurry to ripeness in the breath of the fire. Says another: "Love satisfied of itself would, I suppose, be complete and would need no literature; but the heat and burden of desire seek to record something." Having been moved by beautiful things "an instinct rebukes any 'use' of such feelings; but they rise easily, as I write, out of a store of images unconsciously accumulated." And so we are brought round to Keats and Rossetti again.

Chapter Three: Women as Poets

IT would not be easy to show that women have had any great influence upon English poetry by their own practice of the art. Far too often they have written as if they were only an inferior kind of man. They have written, as they still often write, love-poems upon a masculine model. "The Complaint of a Lover," for example, was written by the gifted and early dead Anne Killigrew (1660–1685) as if from a man:

> See'st thou yonder craggy rock,
> Whose head o'erlooks the swelling main,
> Where never shepherd fed his flock,
> Or careful peasant sow'd his grain.
>
> No wholesome herb grows on the same,
> Or bird of day will on it rest;
> 'Tis barren as the hopeless flame
> That scorches my tormented breast—

yet the image is one of the grandest in poetry. Women are more earthly than men, more directly and practically connected with the circumstances and foundations of life. The earth and this life are nearly good enough for them; not from them has there ever been much whining about their souls and immortality. There are more Marthas to be found than Marys. They do not easily

detach themselves from things as they are here and now, and are less inclined than men to see themselves as a spectacle. Something of the truth at least appears in some lines prefixed by Mary Morpeth to Drummond's poems of 1656:

Then do not sparks with your bright suns compare,
Perfection in a woman's work is rare;
From an untroubled mind should verses flow;
My discontents make mine too muddy show;
And hoarse encumbrances of household care,
Where these remain the Muses ne'er repair.

It might be supposed that it is true of women what every poet says at one time or another of himself, that he thinks "good thoughts, whilst other write good words," that he writes ill because he is so sincere:

Then others for the breath of words respect,
Me for my dumb thoughts, speaking in effect.

So Shakespeare puts it. As men have written little poetry upon love for their friends, so women have written very little expressing their affection for lovers or children. It is rare for a woman to write as Aphra Behn (1640–1689) did, giving as good as she receives, after this fashion:

When my Alexis present is,
Then I for Damon sigh and mourn;
But when Alexis I do miss,
Damon gains nothing but my scorn.

But if it chance they both are by,
For both alike I languish, sigh and die.
Cure then, thou mighty wingèd God,
This restless fever in my blood;
One golden pointed dart take back:
But which, O Cupid, wilt thou take?
If Damon, all my hopes are crost;
Or that of my Alexis, I am lost.

This is so much like a man's poem with "Alexis" and "Damon" substituted for "Corinna" and "Chloe" that it may possibly have been written as a deliberate revenge. Perhaps not so much can be said of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's (1690–1762) ballad, "The Lover." She explains why she is not in a hurry to love; not because she is cold, but because she fears to be cheated and will not buy "long years of repentance for moments of joy." She wants a man who is no pedant, yet learned, obliging and free to all her sex, but fond only of her:

When the long hours in public are past,
And we meet with champagne and a chicken at last,
May every fond pleasure that moment endear;
Be banish'd afar both discretion and fear!
Forgetting or scorning the airs of the crowd,
He may cease to be formal, and I to be proud,
Till lost in the joy, we confess that we live,
And he may be rude and yet I may forgive.

It is a middle-aged ambition, and suggests the woman who in becoming the equal of

men and in seeing much of them has become very much like them. Not even Suckling has coupled love with champagne and chicken in poetry, though he and many another knew that in fact they often are so coupled. It is much commoner to find the poetesses writing of the sober devotion of a wife. The lines "To my Husband" of an anonymous seventeenth-century writer have a sound of the best epitaphs. The conclusion justifies it as a piece of true genius:

> When from the world I should be taen,
> And from earth's necessary pain,
> Then let no blacks be worn for me,
> Not in a ring, my dear, by thee.
> But this bright diamond, let it be
> Worn in remembrance of me.
> And when it sparkles in your eye,
> Think 'tis my shadow passeth by.

The "necessary pain" is characteristic of many poems by women. The verses written to her husband in London by the Hon. Mary Monk (1715), as she lay on her death-bed at Bath, are marvellously like what her husband might have put into her mouth in an epitaph. None the less, she may be sincere when she says that Death woos her "with a cheerful grace" and without one terror, promising her "a lasting rest from pain," showing her that

"life's joys are vain," and when she bids her husband

> Rejoice to see me shake off life,
> And die as I have lived, thy faithful wife.

Elizabeth Tollet (1694–1754) has a winter song to a lover in which she professes herself willing to go anywhere with him, like the Nut-Brown Maid:

> The softest moss should dress thy bed,
> With savage spoils about thee spread;
> While faithful love the watch should keep,
> To banish danger from thy sleep.

This is unusually romantic. It may, however, be matched by a passage from Eliza Heywood (1693–1756), where she makes Ximene, fearing to be forsaken by Palæmon, desire him to kill her:

> 'Tis kinder far to kill than to forsake . . .
> But now to die—now, in my joy's high noon,
> Ere the cold evening of contempt comes on,
> Were to die blest.

Hannah Cowley (1743–1809) sounds a more familiar note in "Edwin and the Huntress" with her

> O marriage! powerful charm, gift all divine
> Sent from the skies, o'er life's drear waste to shine.

In her opinion, Satan envied nothing in Eden

until "in the married pair, he felt mankind were blest."

This is in the same lofty sphere as Mrs. Barbauld's teaching a fond youth what it is to love:

> It is to gaze upon her eyes,
> With eager joy and fond surprise;
> Yet tempered with such chaste and awful fear
> As wretches feel who wait their doom;
> Nor must one ruder thought presume,
> Tho' but in whispers breath'd, to meet her ear.

The blushing Psyche in Mrs. Tighe's poem must have been to the same school, for she let fall in the breast of Eros "a tear of trembling ecstasy" upon his arrival.

With this should be contrasted the abandoned Mary Masters and her—

> Seek not to know my passion's spring,
> The reason to discover;
> For reason is a useless thing,
> When we've commenced the lover.

In spite of mediocrity, a fair number of poems or passages may be found expressing a woman's point of view and addressed to women. Lady Chudleigh (1656–1710) has learnt that "wife and servant are the same," and she bade women value themselves and despise men, and know that to be proud is to be wise. Swift's Stella, Esther Johnson, suc-

ceeds apparently in being sincere as well as lucid and emphatic in her lines on jealousy, which no man could have written unless a woman had supplied him with the sentiment:

O shield me from his rage, celestial Powers!
This tyrant that embitters all my hours.
Ah, Love! you've poorly played the hero's part,
You conquer'd, but you can't defend my heart.
When first I bent beneath your gentle reign,
I thought this monster banish'd from your train:
But you would raise him to support your throne,
And now he claims your empire as his own;
Or tell me, tyrants, have you both agreed
That where one reigns, the other shall succeed?

Swift wrote nothing that comes so near poetry as this, but he was born incapable of poetry, and in any case was unteachable by woman.

Catharine Cockburn (1679–1749) offers this caution to a girl:

Keep ever something in thy power,
  Beyond what would thy honour stain:
He will not dare to aim at more,
  Who for small favours sighs in vain.

The "Auld Robin Gray" of Lady Anne Barnard (1750–1825) expresses the common experience of a woman, especially in the last line of the following verse, after a manner which suggests folk-song:

When the sheep are in the fauld, and when the
cows come hame,
When a' the weary world to quiet rest are gane,
The woes of my heart fa' in showers fra ma ee,
Unkenn'd by my gudeman, who soundly sleeps by me.

Hannah More's (1745–1833) "Simplicity" is as distinctly feminine, both in its view that "life's best joys consist in peace and ease" and in its appeal against those who weep over "The Sorrows of Werther" while the children starve:

O Love divine! sole source of Charity!
More dear one genuine deed perform'd for thee,
Than all the periods feeling e'er could turn,
Than all thy touching page, perverted Sterne.

Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire (1757–1806), Coleridge's Duchess, is one of the few women whose poems to their children survive. She addressed to her children the long lyric narrative upon a passage of the St. Gothard which Coleridge praised, a poem full of a love for Italy and Switzerland, the mountains, the high lakes, the flowers, and the memory of William Tell, expressed in a flowing enthusiastic manner which suggests a personality more attractive in other spheres than poetry. The poem ends:

Hope of my life! dear children of my heart!
That anxious heart, to each fond feeling true,
To you still pants each pleasure to impart,
And more—oh transport!—reach its home in you.

Charlotte Smith (1749–1806) looked at children playing, and her heart was oppressed by fears for their future fate, and her eyes filled with tears. There is no great poem expressing the love of a mother or of a father.

Resignation, a meek sadness, a longing after content, patience, health, and peace, if possible in the country, are very noticeable in the poems of women. Anne Collins (1653) was the author of a resigned spring song, breathing a modest content "however things do fall." Katharine Phillips (1631–1664) wrote an "Ode against Pleasure":

> For many things must make it be,
> But one may make it less.

She consoles herself because "when our fortune's most severe, the less we have, the less we fear." Frances Sheridan (1724–1767), the mother of R. B. Sheridan, wrote an "Ode to Patience"—Patience the "Heaven-descended Maid." Another lady of that age wrote a "Prayer for Indifference." She wanted nothing but

> For my guest serenely calm
> The nymph Indifference bring!

The "nymph" Indifference!

This resignation easily turns to sadness.

Anne Finch, Countess of Winchelsea (1720), looks back sadly on life's progress, when she thinks

> How gaily is it first begun
> Our life's uncertain race.

Elizabeth Rowe (1674–1736) sings Despair with a sought luxury of wretchedness not usual in her time. "Lead me," she cries, "to some solitary gloom" far from the world's "wretched pleasures and distracted joys," and—

> There in a melting, solemn, dying strain,
> Let me all day upon my lyre complain,
> And wind up all its soft harmonious strings,
> To noble, serious, melancholy things. . . .
>
> There to my fatal sorrows let me give
> The short remaining hours I have to live.
> Then, with a sullen, deep-fetch'd groan expire,
> And to the grave's dark solitude retire.

This anticipates the febrile misery of Mary Robinson (1758–1800), with her lines to a friend who is a friend no more, threatening to leave her country and wander through tempest and over desert and sea upon a long business of lamentation; with her lines written to a snowdrop, a flower dear to her because she has so often herself "wept and shrunk like thee." This is Anne Seward's (1747–1809) vein, sorrowing over love,

youth, separation and the past with hysterical triviality, but not insincerely, for she is genuine enough in her anticipation of death's terror:

> Since in the silent grave, no talk!—no music!—
> No gay surprise by unexpected good,
> Social or individual!

So Henrietta, Lady O'Neill (1758–93) wrote an "Ode to the Poppy":

> Soul-soothing plant that can such blessings give,
> By thee the mourner bears to live!
> By thee the hopeless die!

So also Charlotte Smith calls the nightingale "dear to sorrow and to love"; mourns enviously over the grave of a young woman of nineteen—"I would, sweet maid, thy humble bed were mine"; and writes a sonnet to the Moon:

> And oft I think, fair planet of the night,
> That in thy orb the wretched may have rest.

A fancy which she has not weight enough in her character to recommend.

The love of simplicity, rusticity, and healthfulness is more amiable. Katharine Phillips thinks the golden age happy, in friendship and in health, because "On roots, not beasts, they fed." And "Silence and innocence are

safe" in the country life which she desires. Anne, Marchioness of Wharton (1685), wrote verses on the "Snuff of a Candle" during a sickness, calling upon "Health! best part and substance of our joy." Frances Brooke (1789) wrote an "Ode to Health"—"Divinest maid," &c. Mary Chandler (1687–1745) wrote a panegyric with many O's to "Temperance." The Countess of Winchelsea is celebrated, if not well known, for her love of Nature. Her poetry is at least full of observation and genuine sentiment, while her "Nocturnal Reverie," opening though it does with "Gentle Zephyr" and "Lonely Philomel," makes us feel that she has had the magical experience which has been perfectly expressed only by much later poets. She describes a summer evening:

Their short-liv'd jubilee the creatures keep,
Which but endures whilst tyrant man does sleep;
When a sedate content the spirit feels,
And no fierce light disturbs, whilst it reveals;
But silent musings urge the mind to seek
Something too high for syllables to speak;
Till the free soul to a composedness charm'd,
Finding the elements of rage disarm'd,
O'er all below a solemn quiet grown,
Joys in th' inferior world, and thinks it like her own:
In such a night let me abroad remain,
Till morning breaks, and all's confused again,
Our cares, our toils, our clamours are renewed,
Our pleasures, seldom reached, again pursued.

The "sedate content" of this particular complexion was certainly singular in her age.

Mary Leapor (1722–1746), a real gardener's daughter, wrote "The Temple of Love: a Dream," in which there is a temple of Cytherea and in it a blooming damsel and a wealthy swain attended by Riot, Pride, Flattery, Pomp, Pleasure, and Folly. The temple shakes: Suspicion, Loathing, Hate, and Rage enter, and the hall fills with tumult. The dream changes to a "ruin'd nymph" amid gloomy walls, with phantoms of Reproach, Scandal, Despair, and Death. In the eclogue of "The Month of August" a courtier woos a country Phillis. Her reply is pretty:

> Believe me, I can find no charms at all
> In your fine carpets and your painted hall.
> 'Tis true our parlour has an earthen floor,
> The sides of plaster and of elm the door;
> Yet the rubb'd chest and table sweetly shines
> And the spread mint along the window climbs.

She is for her "long-keeping russets" and Catherine pears. She departs to the harvest feast with Corydon:

> Then beef and coleworts, beans and bacon too,
> And the plum-pudding of delicious hue,
> Sweet-spiced cake and apple pies good store,
> Deck the brown board, and who can wish for more?

In the same key Henrietta, Lady Luxborough, Shenstone's friend, contrasts the

artificial song of the caged bullfinch with the song of the wild blackbird. Miss or Mrs. Pennington (1759) is also among the eighteenth-century Arcadians. Her "Ode to Morning" records her preference for the fields to bed on a spring morning. Hester Chapone (1727–1801), who would probably have married Gilbert White if any woman could, wrote an "Ode to Solitude," but chiefly because it was the "nurse of pleasing woe," the playground of Fancy, and the home of Resignation. I like Anna Seward's December morning in 1782:

I love to rise ere gleams the tardy light,
Winter's pale dawn;—and as warm fires illume
And cheerful tapers shine around the room,
Thro' misty windows bend my musing sight,
Where, round the dusky lawn, the mansions white,
  With shutters clos'd, peer faintly thro' the gloom,
  That slow recedes; while yon grey spires assume,
Rising from their dark pile, an added height
By indistinctness given.—Then to decree
  The grateful thoughts to God, ere they unfold
To Friendship, or the Muse, or seek with glee
  Wisdom's rich page:—O hours! more worth than gold,
By whose blest use we lengthen life, and free
  From drear decays of age, outlive the old.

It is a most delicate and original picture, and though she wishes to over-emphasise the emotion of the hour she cannot spoil its

charm. Charlotte Smith's "Beachy Head" has some pleasant recollections of Down scenery, an old cottage-garden at the foot of a hill, the hedgerows and the unfrequented lanes, "warrens and heaths and yellow commons," and bowers where "the dew fills the silver bindweed's cups"; and she makes an effective contrast between wild Nature and the Abbey of St. Monica, now overgrown with weeds, where the pilgrim once came to pray:

> O Nature! ever lovely, ever new,
> He who his earliest vows has paid to you
> Still finds that life has something to bestow;
> And while to dark Forgetfulness they go,
> Man, and the works of man—immortal Youth,
> Unfading Beauty, and Eternal Truth,
> Your Heaven-indicted volume will display,
> While Art's elaborate monuments decay,
> Even as these shatter'd aisles, deserted Monica.

It may be said of this poetry written by women between 1600 and 1800 that it is mostly like that of the contemporary men. It differs because it is inferior, yet that is not the only difference. It cannot indeed be called a body of distinctively feminine thought and emotion; to call it that would be flattering to the poetry and unfair to the women of those generations. But it does express something of the woman's point of view, and it is

coloured over by a feminine colouring and as much by a lack of masculine colouring. I think also that it bears almost as much resemblance to the poetry written since the romantic revival as to contemporary work, and that this means an increasing feminine element in the character of poets, due partly to the refinement of the conditions of life which are favourable also to women, and partly to the direct influence of women themselves, not to their poetry.

Chapter Four: Women, Nature and Poetry

IN Stella's face, says Sidney, he reads what Love and Beauty are, and all his task is but copying what Nature writes in her. Sterne, at the end of his life, in bad health, and separated from the married woman whom he adored, told her that he would give her husband five hundred pounds to let her sit by him two hours a day while he wrote "The Sentimental Journey," and that he would be reimbursed more than seven times over. A score of poets say the same thing in different ways. Women have influenced them chiefly through love, and one of the commonplaces of love-poetry, where their influence is clearest, is that the mistress is its inspiration. The commonplace is in the expression not in the fact which, if true, is never commonplace. And it probably is true that the earliest and strongest of traceable impulses to write have come from women. The other impulses are now dark and old, detected by few, and by still fewer spoken of, having passed long ago into a dumb tradition. Chief among these impulses must be some form of the desire to impress the plastic world of men, to be conspicuous, to create, to possess, to extend the personality in such a

way that it can be said, Not all of me shall die when the breath goes finally out of my body. Probably John Clare heard this impulse when he lay under the huge elm, the "Shepherd's tree," thinking of past times and deeds, until—

> The wind of that eternal ditty sings
> Humming of future things, that turn the mind
> To leave some fragment of itself behind.

And Shelley heard it in that universal west wind that made him feel his own weakness and yet cry to the wind: "Make me thy lyre even as the forest is," and "Drive my dead thoughts over the universe like withered leaves to quicken a new birth." And so lovely is the calm immortal and unchanging world of imagination and of art that, in apparent disloyalty to life, it is desired even amidst life in its supremacy, because it is a world inaccessible to age, winter, hatred, tyranny, disease, stupidity, or death. It is easiest in the presence of Nature for the poet or another to reach this harbour of Eternity that is in the coasts of mere time, and to divide women or love from Nature in the inspiration of poetry is next to impossible.

A German writer on "The Development of the feeling for Nature in the Middle Ages and Modern Times," Alfred Biese, discovers

in "the amorous passion" the soil in which the sympathy with Nature first began to grow, and he quotes from a troubadour this modern thought at the rising of a lark: "Strange that such gladdening sight should bring not joy, but care to me."

Richard Jefferies has used the character of Felise in his "Dewy Morn" to show not only how the beauty of humanity and of Nature is mingled in the form of that girl, but how in the presence of Nature love swelled within her breast before she had a lover. It is a lover, Jefferies himself, who says that "the whole face of earth and sky ministered to her, each and all that made up the visible world was flung at her feet. They did homage—Felise, queen of herself, was queen of all." In her heart was "love without a lover"; "pure love, pure as the spring-water that comes from the hills, was there ready to be poured forth." Before she saw her lover her heart was lost: she lost it among the flowers, in the wind, by the stream, among her books, among the stars: and though her vigour of life was great, it was not that which made her so strong and beautiful and energetic, but love. "If such a great and noble woman," says Jefferies, "were enclosed in a prison from youth, and permitted no sight of man, still to the end of existence she would love." Shelley uses

almost the same words in his "On Love" where he says that "In solitude, or that deserted state when we are surrounded by human beings and yet they sympathise not with us, we love the flowers, the grass, the waters, and the sky. In the motion of the very leaves of spring, in the blue air, there is then found a secret correspondence with our heart. There is eloquence in the tongueless wind, and a melody in the flowing brooks and the rustling of the reeds beside them, which by their inconceivable relation to something within the soul, awaken the spirits to a dance of breathless rapture, and bring tears of mysterious tenderness to the eyes, like the enthusiasm of patriotic success, or the voice of one beloved singing to you alone. Sterne says that if he were in a desert he would love some cypress. So soon as this want or power is dead, man becomes a living sepulchre of himself, and what yet survives is the mere husk of what once he was."

In the ballads and folk-songs women are thus connected with Nature a thousand times. "As I walked forth one Midsummer morning a-viewing the meadows and to take the air" is always prelusive to an unexpected meeting of love. They love, and they even bear their children, in some bower "in the good green wood among the lily flower." But alas!

during the Renaissance the natural was almost obscured by the pastoral in the formal poetry of love. Scotland was preserved from a disaster of equal extent by a less complete submission to an urban civilisation and by the survival of a stout provincialism. The influence of Nature and the influence of woman survive in Scottish song, and they survive together. It is full of—

> Ca' the yowes to the knowes,
> Ca' them whare the heather grows,
> Ca' them whare the burnie rows,
> My bonnie dearie——

instead of—

> Come live with me and be my Love
> And we will all the pleasures prove
> That hills and valleys, dale and field,
> And all the craggy mountains yield.

Where England yields—

> The opening flowers where'er she went
> Diffus'd their tributary scent,

and

> O blessed brook! whose milk-white
> swans adore
> Thy crystal stream, refinèd by her eyes,

Scotland has

> The bonny bush aboon Traquair
> Was where I first did love her . . .

and it has the songs of Burns and of those worthy singing peers and predecessors who helped to make him the first of them all. Their women are Scotch women and their country is Scotch country, but it cannot be said of the women or the country in many English poets between the Renaissance and the Romantic Revival that they are English. When that Revival came women and Nature were once more to be seen inseparable and in harmony: Wordsworth, for example, nearly always used women to obtain his wildest and loveliest natural effects, as in "Ruth," "The Affliction of Margaret," "The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman," "Margaret," "Beggars," "To Joanna" (that wild-hearted maid), the "Highland Girl," "She was a Phantom of Delight," "Stepping Westward," "The Solitary Reaper," "Three Years she Grew," "The Thorn," and "Lucy Gray." Many of these women are, in fact, more like the spirits or nymphs of certain places than human beings. Take, for instance, "The Solitary Reaper." This is founded upon a sentence in Thomas Wilkinson's "Tours to the British Mountains," where he tells of a woman reaping alone, singing in Erse as she bent over her sickle, in the sweetest human voice he had ever heard, and how her strains were tenderly melancholy and "felt delicious

long after they were heard no more." Even in the first verse of the poem she is only a voice. In the second verse the humanity of the voice escapes in the comparison for sweetness to a nightingale "among Arabian sands" and for its thrilling quality to the cuckoo

> Breaking the silence of the seas
> Among the farthest Hebrides.

Though he returns to her and to mankind in the next, it is to mankind remote and spiritualised into something like a sound of waters or trees. The last verse leaves her a voice once more, a music within the brain so separate from the woman that he bears it with him long after she was heard no more. Then, again, take the "Highland Girl." Wordsworth and his sister saw her at Inversneyde upon Loch Lomond in August 1803, and he had a most vivid remembrance of her forty years later, in his seventy-third year. She was daughter to a ferryman, innocent and merry, "exceedingly beautiful and pronouncing English sweetly, but, as we do a foreign speech, slowly." She and the scene were "like something fashioned in a dream." He calls her a "dream and vision," and though he sees her "benignity and home-bred sense," he dreams of the pleasure of dwelling there with her:

> A shepherd, thou a shepherdess!—

and then recalls that she is to him "but as a wave of the wild sea." He would wish to have some claim upon her:

> Thy elder Brother I would be,
> Thy Father, any thing to thee!

But see how he ends. He is not loth to part from her:

> Nor am I loth, though pleased at heart,
> Sweet Highland Girl! from Thee to part;
> For I, methinks, till I grow old,
> As fair before me shall behold,
> As I do now, the Cabin small,
> The Lake, the Bay, the Waterfall;
> And Thee, the Spirit of them all.

He has got within him all of her that is related to himself, and is content to go, very wisely and comfortably. So also in "Stepping Westward," another poem of the same period as the "Highland Girl" and "Solitary Reaper." The greeting of the strange women upon the solitary road was "something without place or bound"; it seemed to give him "spiritual right to travel through that region bright"; and the mingling of the human voice and the power of evening was complete:

> The echo of the voice enwrought
> A human sweetness with the thought
> Of travelling through the world that lay
> Before me in my endless way.

It is, therefore, not surprising to find the old man who tells the tale of "Margaret" saying:

> The Poets, in their elegies and songs
> Lamenting the departed, call the groves,
> They call upon the hills and streams to mourn,
> And senseless rocks; nor idly; for they speak
> In these their invocations, with a voice
> Obedient to the strong creative power
> Of human passion. . . .

It will be remembered also that "Lucy Gray" was written to "exhibit poetically entire solitude." Whether as the result of this or not, Lucy Gray herself, though "the sweetest thing that ever grew beside a human door," is but a thin spirit upon the wind. The first verse makes her so much though it calls her a "solitary child"; the last verse leaves her no less—though "some maintain that to this day she is a living child"—and it is something not more human than a curlew that "sings a solitary song that whistles in the wind." One poem, "She was a Phantom of Delight," describes another of these "lovely apparitions," a phantom "sent to be a moment's ornament," and how he came to know her, "a spirit, yet a woman too," a perfect woman with human virtues,—

> And yet a Spirit still, and bright
> With something of an angel light.

"Three Years She Grew" describes the making of such a woman. Nature makes her in order to have a Lady of her own: Nature is to be her "law and impulse"; the lines of her very beauty are to be guided by Nature, taking the silence and the calm of "mute insensate things": she and Nature are to live together and apparently alone. The lovely work is done, but Lucy dies—

> She died and left to me
> This heath, this calm and quiet scene . . .

Almost it seems as if this calm and quiet scene had given birth to Lucy instead of swallowing her up.

In Wordsworth's poetry then it frequently happens that a woman is the embodied spirit of a place, and most angelically embodied, too. In degree, but not in kind, he is unique, when he thus combines the two into one spirit of power. They were combined in Shakespeare's mind when he wrote the hundred and thirty-second sonnet, with its ascent out of two dark eyes and a conceit into a vast world—

> And truly not the morning sun of heaven
> Better becomes the grey cheeks of the east,
> Nor that full star that ushers in the even
> Doth half that glory to the sober west,
> As those two mourning eyes become thy face . . .

It would be absurd to call this metaphor, as if it were a separable decoration, since to employ it so would be a device of shameless rhetoric that never could move the heart. His love is not confined to one woman or to her flesh alone, but is an experience of his whole nature in which she, Mary Fitton or not, the dark lady, plays a magic but an indefinable part. She is the doorkeeper of east and west, and has thrown open their doors for the poet. And conversely, when Shakespeare wishes to put a spirit of beauty into flowers, as in Perdita's funeral speech, he must take the spirit from a woman for his violets dim,

> But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes
> Or Cytherea's breath.

I cannot decide whether or no the sonnets addressed to a man record a passion for this man, but that they record passion there can be no doubt: I at least can imagine nothing but passion which could help a man to such alchemy of words as:

> That time of year thou mayst in me behold
> When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
> Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
> Bare, ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds
> sang.
> In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
> As after sunset fadeth in the west.

It is the writing of a passionate heart, though whether at that moment passionate towards one human being I do not know. Love opens the door, but it does not know what is within, whether it be treasure, nothingness or devils; and of the unimagined things beyond the door love-poetry is the revelation. That love-poetry seems so often to have little to do with love is because we forget that there are matters in the presence of which any man and Shakespeare are equally impotent and silent. Many love-poems were never shown to their begetters, many would not have moved them nor were in a sense meant for them at all. The love-poem is not for the beloved, for it is not worthy, as it is the least thing that is given to her, and none knows this better than she unless it be the lover. It is written in solitude, is spent in silence and the night like a sigh with an unknown object. It may open with desire of woman, but it ends with unexpected consolation or with another desire not of woman. Love-poetry, like all other lyric poetry, is in a sense unintentionally overheard, and only by accident and in part understood, since it is written not for any one, far less for the public, but for the understanding spirit that is in the air round about or in the sky or somewhere.

It is not only the present or past lover of

one particular woman that can read and penetrate and enjoy love-poems, and this fact alone might show how vain it is to regard them as addressed merely to those whose names they may bear. When do the words of love-poems come into the mind or on to the lips? It is upon a hundred different occasions having nothing in common save that beauty is there or is desired. The sight of a fine landscape, recovery from sickness, rain in spring, music of bird or instrument or human voice, may at any time evoke as the utterance of our hearts the words long ago addressed to a woman who never saw them, and is now dead. And as these things revive poems in the mind of a reader, so certainly they have given birth to some of those poems in the minds of poets; and the figure of a woman is introduced unwittingly as a symbol of they know not what, perhaps only of desire; or if there is no woman mentioned, it will as often as not bring one into the thoughts and so prove, if need were, that hers was the original incantation. We treat them as parts written for ourselves to act, in the spirit, as they were written by the poet, in the spirit. There is much of the poetry of Shelley and of Spenser, for example, written since they knew a woman, which has no mention of woman, and yet is full of love and fit to

awaken and to satisfy love. The proof is that the heart of the youth when it is most loving fastens upon their words for its expression. How many times has Shelley—Shelley and the daffodils of Devon or the wild thyme of Wiltshire—been the half of a first love? To how many does his poetry not seem, during a great lovely tract of life, to have been the half of spring and summer and autumn, of night and dawn and noon, and of youth enjoying these things? At the time when youth is most exultant, this poetry is thumbed night and day; a page is opened at random, as Virgil used to be, for a word big with fate; and his lines come to the lips, seeming as suitable to light and darkness as Cassiopeia's crown or as the sun waking in radiance and precious clouds on the long hills. For some Spenser may take the same part, to others Marlowe. They find themselves upon turning away from a deep solitary landscape that has held them by the eyes in silence for a long time, at last repeating, without having sought for it, Spenser's

So passeth, in the passing of a day,
Of mortal life the leaf, the bud, the flower,
Ne more doth flourish after fast decay,
That erst was sought to deck both bed and
    bower,
Of many a Lady and many a Paramour:

Gather therefore the Rose, whilst yet is prime,
For soon comes age, that will her pride deflower:
Gather the Rose of love, whilst yet is time,
Whilst loving thou mayst loved be with equal crime.

or it may be:

Amorous Leander, beautiful and young . . .

Conversely, and perversely too, with love in the heart they will utter with religious solemnity the "O wild west wind" or "Thou hast a voice, great mountain, to repeal large codes of fraud and woe."

Byron, wishing to explain this tide of love that can bear upon its full spread so many other ships than the one where the beloved is sitting, says of Rousseau's love:

But his was not the love of living dame,
Nor of the dead who rise upon our dreams,
But of ideal beauty, which became
In him existence, and o'erflowing teems
Along his burning page, distemper'd though it
seems.

This breathed itself to life in Julie, *this*
Invested her with all that's wild and sweet;
This hallow'd, too, the memorable kiss
Which every morn his fever'd lip would greet,
From hers, who but with friendship his would meet;
But to that gentle touch, through brain and breast
Flash'd the thrilled spirit's love-devouring heat;
In that absorbing sigh perchance more blest
Than vulgar minds may be with all they seek possest.

Love, Nature and Liberty are three, but indivisible on the pages of many poets, of young poets who sit like Lamartine upon an island like a poet's dream in a fair sea, and foster the double dream of those who are worthy to dream great things: Love and Liberty. To that island they have gone to look upon sky and sea, to let the spirit evaporate in the sun, to feel and to record the ferment of youthful impressions, sentiments, and ideas which some day will make poetry. So the young poet explains himself to the island girl who wants to know why he has left his home and his family; and the sweet-voiced, dark-haired girl, Graziella, laughs at him merrily, and when he is too long at his book she steals up behind him and suddenly grasps book or pen and runs off with it, only replying when caught with the question, Is it not pleasanter to talk to me than to read?

Perhaps the most unanswerable testimony of all is to be found in the poetry which John Clare wrote during his twenty years' imprisonment in a madhouse. He had already in earlier days called his Muse a wild enchantress, and had wooed her on a bed of thyme, and had seen solitude as a woman with wild ringlets lying unbound over her lily shoulders. He had already written a poem on the "Death of Beauty"—

Now thou art gone, the fairy rose is fled,
That erst gay Fancy's garden did adorn.
Thine was the dew on which her folly fed,
The sun by which she glittered in the morn. . . .

But he was to get far beyond this statement that with the death of the woman died Nature's beauty. These latest and finest poems leave personifications far behind. His native trees and fields, and the women he loved after they had died or vanished, haunted him in his prison. His mind seemed to shed all its mere intelligence and all its conventionality in the use of words. He was left free as a spirit in his ghastly solitude. Then to him his Mary became a part of the spring, a part inexplicably absent. He had talked to the flowers when a child, and when a man they had "told the names of early love": now that he was alone, they decked "the bier of spring." But if one of the Marys came into his mind it was in as complete a harmony with Nature as one of Wordsworth's women, yet with little or nothing of his thin spiritual quality. The woman of "The Invitation" is real:

Come with thy maiden eye, lay silks and satins by;
Come in thy russet or grey cotton gown;
Come to the meads, dear, where flags, sedge, and reeds appear,
Rustling to soft winds and bowing low down.

If she is a spirit, she is a spirit of the English earth, not of the transparent air. Another "Lover's Invitation" shows the same union of woman and earth and sky. So too such poems as "Evening" with its—

> I walk with my true love adown the green vale,
> The light feathered grasses keep tapping her shoe.

In "The Morning Walk" the country maid climbing the stile in the early summer morning is as much a flower as the rose that she crops—

> She cropt a flower, shook off the dew,
> And on her breast the wild rose grew;
> She blushed as fair, as lovely, too,
> The living rose of morning.

He has a poem to the "Maid of the Wilderness," a nymph of place made of firm flesh. When primrose and celandine come in March, he says, "The sun shines about me so sweet, I cannot help thinking of love." In a poem on Evening that begins with a verse of description, he says:

> The evening comes in with the wishes of love

and

> For Nature is love, and finds haunts for true love,
> Where nothing can hear or intrude;
> It hides from the eagle and joins with the dove,
> In beautiful green solitude.

He breaks out into a wild cry for a "bonny lassie O!" and it might be thought, so full of natural things is the poem, that she was a flower maid like the Welsh Blodeuwedd whom Math framed out of blossoms, but she is an English country girl notwithstanding and he wants her

> In a grassy nook hard by, with a little
> patch of sky
> And a bush to keep us dry,
> Bonny lassie O!

The gipsy lass in the smoky camp among the scented woodbine is a fellow to her. Perhaps the maddest and most perfect of the asylum poems, "Love lives beyond the tomb," is remarkable for nothing so much as for its eloquent but inexplicable expression of this harmony of nature and love. It must therefore be quoted in full:

> Love lives beyond the tomb,
> And earth which fades like dew!
> I love the fond,
> The faithful and the true.
>
> Love lives in sleep:
> 'Tis happiness of healthy dreams:
> Eve's dews may weep,
> But love delightful seems.
>
> 'Tis seen in flowers,
> And in the morning's pearly dew;
> In earth's green hours,
> And in the heaven's eternal blue.

'Tis heard in spring,
When light and sunbeams, warm and kind,
On angel's wing
Bring love and music to the mind.

And where's the voice,
So young, so beautiful, and sweet
As Nature's choice,
Where spring and lovers meet?

Love lives beyond the tomb,
And earth, which fades like dew!
I love the fond,
The faithful and the true.

This and perhaps all of his best poems show Clare as one of those who have in them the natural spirit of poetry in its purity, so pure that perhaps he can never express it quite whole and perfect. They are songs of innocence, praising a world not realised, or, it is more reasonable to say, a world which most old and oldish people agree to regard as something different. For such a writer the usual obstacles and limits are temporary or do not exist at all, and as with children the dividing line between the real and the unreal, either shifts or has not yet been made. No man or woman is a poet who does not frequently, to the end of life, ignore these obstacles and limits, which are not just and absolute but represent the golden mean or average, and have less reality than the equator. Few,

except idiots, can escape them altogether, since they are produced by weariness and compromise, which are produced by time and without effort. Some great men escape while seeming to accept them, but there is hardly a pleasure in the world equal to that of seeing one who is not a child and has yet escaped them so happily as Clare. He reminds us that words are alive, and not only alive but still half-wild and imperfectly domesticated. They are quiet and gentle in their ways, but are like cats—to whom night overthrows our civilisation and servitude—who seem to love us but will starve in the house which we have left, and thought to have emptied of all worth. Words never consent to correspond exactly to any object unless, like scientific terms, they are first killed. Hence the curious life of words in the hands of those who love all life so well that they do not kill even the slender words but let them play on; and such are poets. The magic of words is due to their living freely among things, and no man knows how they came together in just that order when a beautiful thing is made like "Full fathom five." And so it is that children often make phrases that are poetry, though they still more often produce it in their acts and half-suggested thoughts; and that grown men with dictionaries are

as murderous of words as entomologists of butterflies.

Here, I think, in "Love lives beyond the tomb," in this unprejudiced singing voice that knows not what it sings, is some reason for us to believe that poets are not merely writing figuratively when they say, "My love is like a red, red rose," that they are to be taken more literally than they commonly are, that they do not invent or "make things up" as grown people do when they condescend to a child's game. What they say is not chosen to represent what they feel or think, but is itself the very substance of what had before lain dark and unapparent, is itself all that survives of feeling and thought, and cannot be expanded or reduced without dulling or falsification. If this is not so, and if we do not believe it to be so, then poetry is of no greater importance than wall-paper, or a wayside drink to one who is not thirsty. But if it is so, then we are on the way to understand why poetry is mighty; for if what poets say is true and not feigning, then of how little account are our ordinary assumptions, our feigned interests, our playful and our serious pastimes spread out between birth and death. Poetry is and must always be apparently revolutionary if active, anarchic if passive. It is the utter-

ance of the human spirit when it is in touch with a world to which the affairs of "this world" are parochial. Hence the strangeness and thrill and painful delight of poetry at all times, and the deep response to it of youth and of love; and because love is wild, strange, and full of astonishment, is one reason why poetry deals so much in love, and why all poetry is in a sense love-poetry.

Mad Clare reminds us of those mad maids, and their songs that are so characteristic of English poetry, if indeed they are not, as Mrs. Meynell thinks, a peculiarly English fancy. Such are Ophelia, Wordsworth's Ruth, and Herrick's Mad Maid. Clare himself only once mentions the mad maid, when he bids the man who persists in valuing the vanities of life,

> Plait straws with Bedlam Bess
> And call them diamond rings.

He himself sings like one of them in places, especially in the "Adieu," where he says good-bye to his love before going to sea:

> I left the little birds
> And sweet lowing of the herds,
> And couldn't find out words,
> Do you see,

To say to them good-bye,
Where the yellow cups do lie ;
So heaving a deep sigh,
Took to sea.

These maids concern us here only because they are always love-lorn and always flower-lovers wandering in the free air. In Herrick's poem she bids good-morrow equally to the primrose and to the maids who are to strew her love's tomb with flowers. She herself, with torn hair dew-bedabbled, is like a flower a little wildly fondled by the wind, and she calls for our pity only as much as a flower does. She seems a wave-cold creature who has had absolution from much of her humanity. She is like Ophelia who is not sorry any more with the flowers in her hand, "incapable," as the Queen says "of her own distress,"

Or like a creature native and indu'd
Unto that element.

Crazed Kate of "The Task" is another: but she never smiles in her wanderings over what seemed to Cowper the dreary waste, begging for a pin, never for food or clothes. Wordsworth's Ruth, when not seven years old, went wandering "in thoughtless freedom bold," and

Had built a bower upon the green,
As if she from her birth had been
An infant of the woods.

So when the grown woman was deserted by her husband and she went mad, even in her prison cell she "nor wanted sun, nor rain, nor dew"; when she fled it was in the fields that she "breathed again"; there with her flute of hemlock stalk she had "less of mind, than body's wretchedness"; and she returned to the play of her infancy. I cannot now omit to mention the last and not the least beautiful use of the mad flower-loving maid in poetry:

> Let me be free to wear my dreams,
> Like weeds in some mad maiden's hair
> When she doth think the world has not
> Another maid so rich and fair;
> And proudly smiles on rich and poor,
> The queen of all fair women then:
> So I, dressed in my idle dreams,
> Will think myself the king of men.

The poet is William H. Davies and the verse is from his "Farewell to Poesy," which was published only this year.

To return. It seems that the love of women being a feeling that is radical, it, and the memory or the hope or the possibility of it, stir men in just that instinctive manner which makes poetry, or at least gathers a store of the material for poetry. The evidence of the poets themselves appears to justify us in accepting Coleridge's words: "Suppose a wide and delightful landscape

and what the eye is to the light and the light to the eye, that interchangeably is the lover to the beloved." Which leads him on to this address from a lover to his beloved: "Light of mine eye! by which alone I not only see all I see, but which makes up more than half the loveliness of the objects seen, yet, still, like the rising sun in the morning, like the moon at night, remainest thyself and for thyself, the dearest, fairest form of all the thousand forms that derive from thee all their visibility, and borrow from thy presence their chiefest beauty." The claim that women have influenced poetry by their profound and mysterious association with Nature, could not have an expression more clear or more authoritative.

Chapter Five: Passion and Poetry

IN the last chapter women were regarded as influencing poetry in their guise of minor rustic deities or nymphs of wood and water and mountain, a guise due in part to their nature and their traditional connections, and in part to their lovers and love itself. But this, though perhaps often a strong undetected form of their power, is not a chief one to more than one or two poets. Their chief influence in love has been exerted by the stimulation of desire—desire to possess not only them but other known and unknown things deemed necessary to that perfection of beauty and happiness which love proposes. It is a desire of impossible things which the poet alternately assuages and rouses again by poetry. He may attempt to sate it by violence in pleasure, in action, in wandering; but though he can make it impotent he cannot sate it: or he may turn his attempt inward upon himself. In either case he comes late or soon to poetry. There may seem to be infidelity in the act of writing, with its inevitable detachment from the very object of praise or complaint. If there were no night, no need of rest or food, no limit to the strength of the body or the vigour of the spirit, no obstacles of distance, custom,

necessity and chance, not to speak of the woman's possible inability to love in return, it would be reasonable to speak of infidelity. There could be no love-poetry in Paradise. It is made by unsatisfied desire, and that is made by our mortality and the conditions of life, which are essentially unalterable.

Nevertheless, the accusation survives. Poets frequently say that if only they loved less they could write better; the fact being that they are under a compulsion so mighty that writing is not a pleasing self-conscious exercise but a duty of whose performance they cannot judge. Landor is not alone in ridiculing the "little dainty poet" who writes so gracefully because he is undisturbed, and in saying—

> That slender twigs send forth the fiercest flame,
> Not without noise, but ashes soon succeed,
> While the broad chump leans back against the stones,
> Strong with internal fire, sedately breathed,
> And heats the chamber round from morn till night.

Landor is, however, no overwhelming authority, and he probably wants us to believe that he is the honest "broad chump"—in vain. Browning's "One word more" is another apparent slight upon love-poetry. Browning is one of the few poets to make poetry out of

a matured passion that has passed through the fulfilment of marriage, and "One word more" is most likely the proof that he found it difficult. Beside the clear seen, grave, and manifold bliss of union it is natural that words should seem light; that there should be any need of so unfair a comparison is surprising. Browning implies that its public capacity desecrates his art when he wishes to write something actually for the eye of his beloved. He is only upbraiding words for not being deeds, and he proceeds with great ingenuousness—in a poem printed in a book like any other—

> God be thanked, the meanest of His creatures
> Boasts two soul-sides, one to face the world with,
> One to show a woman when he loves her,

and to say that she also has two sides, and one of them is known to him alone. The whole poem is in effect a revelation of the poet in search of a new compliment, and in the end it is the search itself that is the compliment.

Few love-poems take us into the world of social life as "One word more" does, instead of into the solitude characteristic of the detachment of composition, where the mistress is "Lady of the solitude." Shakespeare's sonnets, from "In the old age black was not

counted fair" onwards, appear to be most of them far more than usual directly related to facts of present or very recent experience. "In the old age" itself is not one of these, and there are others such as "My mistress's eyes are nothing like the sun," where some of the lines are too much like the hundred thousand other Elizabethan sonnets to have an individual effect. But in the main so immediately connected with life are they that they are not wholly intelligible without a key, and not even yet are we quite sure that the right key is in our hands, though Mr. Frank Harris's brilliant book, "The Man Shakespeare," makes us fairly confident that it is. Some, like "My love is as a fever," are of the kind that make us wonder what was the impulse to put down upon paper for the brute strange world things so new, terrible, and dark; it is simple truth, depicting one man's feeling at one moment, and no more. "O call not me to justify the wrong" has the pathos of a helpless simplicity in its "Dear heart, forbear" and "her pretty looks." The lack of anything that might even seem to be decoration gives the series to the Dark Lady an extreme power, exchanging for Shakespeare's customary sensuousness of language the undraped sensuousness and still greater sensuality of the man himself. Seeing how

seldom poetry has mastered this directness it is a wonder that some have not refused to call these poems at all. They are, as Shelley said, and they are that continually, "a whetstone for the dull intelligence." They do not, or hardly at all, make any appeal to the indolent love of poetry. For mere happy delight, such as the earlier sonnets often give, a man would as soon read Blake's Prophetic Books or Cowper's Olney Hymns. They refer to a passion for the one particular woman who inspired them, and there is no general interest in them. They ought to attract men who do not read poetry, except that the elliptical character of poetry, regardless of the average man and the public, is here in its perfection. The poet could have said of them more accurately than of those to Mr. W. H.: "Reserve them for my love, not for their rhyme." The love obliterates the rhyme. There is nothing else. Shakespeare had no need to ask for a new language, as Browning asked, but was "using Nature, that's an art to others." The poems worthy to stand with them as the expression of love, not heavenly love, but love body and soul, can be counted, when they are found, on the fingers of the two hands.

It is quite certain that many of the Elizabethans loved in a manner as little virtuous

as Shakespeare's; but perhaps they had not his abandonment or lack of shame; at any rate their expression followed their experience afar off. The fact that their sonnets have the appearance of having been written in cool ease is in no wise an argument against the depth of their affections: it merely proves them poor writers, men with an impassable door between their poetry and their individual life, men who could not be sincere with the best will in the world except when compelled in a state of excitement to utter plain prose. Such a one calls his lines "unpolished, rude and base," "unworthy to blazon beauty's glory"; but bids them to go to her and if she laugh at them tell her to look within his heart for the truth. Another, in spite of their "levity," puts forth his scores of sonnets and madrigals in accordance with his friend's importunity. He commands them to "pack hence" and to deny their origin and aim to any questioner. What he calls "levity" may be imagined from his tone:

> I never will from labour wits release!
> My senses never shall in quiet rest;
> Till thou be pitiful and love alike!

Yet to such a man a refusal or the expectation of an unwanted child may have meant a sleepless or, at any rate, a drunken night. But he did

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke
(From the Portrait by Mark Gerards)

not send his sonnets to that quarter unless he thought to convince a mere woman—a proud one or else a slattern weeping—that these words did credit to anything but his University. The elder Giles Fletcher says right out in his address to the reader, that he wrote his sonnets to try his humour: "And for the matter of Love, it may be I am so devoted to some one into whose hands these may light by chance, that she may say, which thou now sayest, 'That surely he is in love': which if she do, then have I the full recompense of my labour." Which would be an acceptable look of recognition to a pretty unknown if she had had more credible pledges in secret; especially as their author had been an ambassador and a Member of Parliament. It may have been for her to laugh at that he replied to the question "What my Licia is?" with the suggestions—she may be Learning's image, or some other personification, or the patroness of the poems, or a college; or "it may be conceit and pretend nothing." Most of these thousands of sonnets awake no curiosity as to "the facts of the case," though a man would give much to have a complete intimate account of the private life of a sonneteer during the period of conception and composition. This account might be printed on one side of the page and

the sonnets on the other, like original and translation.

The sonnet had become, in fact, so powerful a thing of itself that the chances were against a man who set out to use it as a medium of "emotion remembered in tranquillity." He might as well hope to be the saviour of mankind in a well-ironed silk hat. Take the case of Thomas Lodge. When he was thirty he went upon a voyage to the Canaries, and during the voyage wrote his "Rosalynde: Euphues' Golden Legacie." This romance contains one of the loveliest of English artificial lyrics, that beginning:

> Love in my bosom, like a bee,
> Doth suck his sweet:
> Now with his wings he plays with me,
> Now with his feet.
> Within mine eyes he makes his nest,
> His bed amid my tender breast;
> My kisses are his daily feast,
> And yet he robs me of my rest:
> Ah! wanton, will ye?

Lodge thought every line of "Rosalynde" wet with the surge, but who will point to the influence of the Straits of Magellan upon these four verses? There is no reason to suppose that the disguisings and Arcadianism of the romance have anything to do with Lodge's own life, but the prose and verse are

a lover's, and "Love in my bosom, like a bee" is with all the sophistication of its origin and method a love-poem as fresh as anything in Burns. It is full of the beauty and gaiety and desire of youth. Conventional and artificial as are the assumptions in it Lodge has absorbed them, they are second nature, and to the reader who has equally absorbed them, the song has the matin clearness and sweetness. Its world is delicate fadeless Arcady, be it remembered, and not England, but for some men that are twenty centuries old this Arcady is as homelike as England. Three years after "Rosalynde" was out came Lodge's "Phillis honoured with Pastorall Sonnets, Elegies, and Amorous Delights." The best thing in the collection is the verse upon the title-page:

Jam Phœbus disjungit equos, jam Cinthia jungit,

which being debased into English prose is, "Now Phœbus unharnesseth his steeds and Cinthia harnesseth hers." We do not know anything about Phillis. If she understood the poems, she would probably promise him a kiss if he would forbear writing any more sonnets. If she did not understand them, she would think him a good scholar and much above her. He never gets near to beauty or to any kind of reality in this style:

I would in rich and golden-coloured rain,
With tempting showers in pleasant sort descend
Into fair Phillis' lap, my lovely friend,
When sleep her sense with slumber doth restrain.
I would be changed to a milk-white bull. . . .

This is a common misfortune of Elizabethan poets, to write well when they are writing a lyric dramatically or at least not professedly in their own persons, and to write ill when they are addressing some Licia, Diana, Phillis, Delia, Idea, Fidessa, Laura, Parthenophe or another. It befell Michael Drayton in his sonnets to "Idea." Mr. Oliver Elton has proved that Idea (at least in 1593) was Anne Goodere, who married Sir Henry Rainsford in 1595 or 1596. It was in the Gooderes' house in Warwickshire that Drayton had been reared, and Anne is known to have been a beautiful woman. Probably Drayton saw her often at her husband's house, and the poems addressed to her cover a period of a quarter of a century. It is not known that Drayton was ever married, but it is also not probable that his devotion to Anne Rainsford was of a kind to trouble Sir Henry. With the help of the sonnets and the dedications of Drayton's books this outline can be filled out somewhat, and in more than one way. The majority of the sonnets, it must be admitted, seem to bear a direct relation to important

states of mind. "There's nothing grieves me, but that Age should haste," for example, where he wishes he could live long enough to see his scornful lady old and so ready enough to be delighted with praises at last,—that sonnet is a definite and forcible piece of spleen. But for the most part the sonnets are more difficult to piece together than Shakespeare's, and neither their intensity nor Drayton's repute is enough to oblige us to take the necessary pains. Once, in "Since there's no help, come, let us kiss and part," a sonnet first printed at the end of the twenty-five years and so, perhaps, corresponding to a final farewell, Drayton rose to great poetry in addressing his "Idea." Yet it may be doubted whether any one has justified the hope he had, in the "Hymn to his Lady's Birthplace," that the old man passing by the door in Coventry shall say to his son:

> There was that Lady born, which long
> To after-ages shall be sung;
> Who unawares being passed by,
> Back to that house shall cast his eye,
> Speaking my verses as he goes,
> And with a sigh shut every close.

The failure of Drayton's verses directly inspired by his mistress and actually addressed to her, may perhaps be put down to the too great deliberation of his attitude. He was

setting out to do what Shakespeare and very few others have done, to make poetry straight out of experience, not merely upon an impulse due to experience. This seems almost to forbid that unconscious ripening of the idea which Keats knew and wished always and exclusively to obey. This process probably accounts for the superiority of Drayton's poems which either profess to express another's love or deal artificially with his own. Gorbo's three verses in the ninth eclogue of the "Shepherd's Garland" are an example:

> Through yonder vale as I did pass,
> Descending from the hill,
> I met a smirking bonny lass,
> They call her Daffodil:
>
> Whose presence as along she went,
> The pretty flowers did greet,
> As though their heads they downward bent,
> With homage to her feet.
>
> And all the shepherds that were nigh,
> From top of every hill,
> Unto the valleys low did crie,
> There goes sweet Daffodil.

Here the grace of beauty blinds us to the unreality of the pastoral convention, and though we might be at a loss to say what Daffodil was like, and what her attire and way of walking and of speaking, yet she

indubitably lives, blithe, fresh, and to be loved. She is of the same country as Dowsabell of the eighth eclogue, perhaps own sister to that "maiden fair and free":

> This maiden in a morn betime,
> Went forth when May was in her prime,
> To get sweet Cetywall,
> The Honeysuckle, the Harlock,
> The Lily and the Lady-smock,
> To deck her summer hall.

Love is also most clearly the inspiration of the fervid shepherd's song in "The Shepherd's Sirena," beginning

> Near to the silver Trent
> Sirena dwelleth. . . .

Whether the love of Anne Goodere or another, no man knows. "The Cryer" is as sophisticated as Lodge's "Love in my bosom." The poet wants a cryer to help him find his heart:

> For my poor heart is run astray
> After two eyes that passed this way.

It is unwise to visualise the once tame heart running astray with a dart stuck in it, and faith and troth written round about it, and the wayfarers looking out for it in order to impound or send it back; and the curious fact is that the dainty tearful frivolity does not ask

us to visualise in this way, but enables us to see through these untoward facts to the genuineness of the amorous spirit playing behind them—like a shepherd's daughter masked as a maid of honour. It may be that the mere name of Daffodil was enough to stir the poet to these verses. A name is enough, or an air, and Lord Herbert has a love-poem entitled "Ditty in Imitation of the Spanish Entre Tantoque el'Avril." Who will be the first critic to cast a stone at the poet for insincerity upon so slight-seeming an occasion? It is rash at best to attack Petrarch because we may feel uncertain regarding his twenty-one years' devotion to Laura. The uncertainty is as much due to irrelevant biographical discovery as to the quality of the sonnets themselves. Of these each man must judge finally in his capacity as human being, but not without having learnt and perhaps forgotten again those conventions which the poet used without conscious artifice. As the sonata can be true-hearted as the folk-song, so the elaborate sonnet or epithalamium can be no less so than "Whistle and I'll come to ye, my lad." One may be just as difficult to write as the other, and the authors of the two have an equal need of detachment and dramatic power. Shakespeare tried both extremes in "How shall I your true love know" and

"That time of year thou mayst in me behold," and in neither is there any impediment to the emotion. A man may some day arise who can understand Pope's "Windsor Forest," and, getting behind its convention, see just what love of old trees it meant in Queen Anne's time. What must never be forgotten is that in any poem the traditional art element is the all but necessary medium for expressing any passion, whether simple and fleshly or hesitating and complicated.

Charles Lamb and the peasant Clare both, when youths, fell in love with girls who were successfully forbidden to see them—Lamb with Ann Simmons, Clare with Mary Joyce. Lamb wrote poems to Ann in 1795, and went mad soon afterwards, in 1796; he thought the girl was "the more immediate cause" of his frenzy. She is the Anna of his earliest poems, of the sonnet, for example, which begins:

> Methinks how dainty sweet it were, reclined
> Beneath the vast out-stretching branches high
> Of some old wood, in careless sort to lie,
> Nor of the busier scenes we left behind
> Aught envying. And, O Anna! mild-eyed maid!
> Beloved! I were well content to play
> With thy free tresses all a summer's day,
> Losing the time beneath the greenwood shade.

A quarter of a century later she was the fair and coy "Alice Winterton" of "Elia." Yet

if only the sonnets remained for our information many would have taken it for granted that they were literary exercises that perhaps dallied a little with "the innocence of love."

Clare was about fifteen when he met Mary Joyce, a farmer's daughter, at Glinton. For six months they were happy together until she was forbidden to meet the pauper's poor son. Then he used to carve her name on trees and walls, and in 1865 could still be seen his inscription of "Mary" and "J.C. 1808" on the porch of Glinton Churchyard. He married another woman before he was thirty. In 1833, when his mind was out of tune with the world, but before he was put away for madness, he saw her who had long been dead passing before his window, and he wrote the poem,

> First love will with the heart remain
> When all its hopes are by. . . .

A little later he was to speak to an invisible "Mary" as his wife, even while the mother of his children was beside him. He was more and more haunted by her, yet addressed one of his sweetest poems to the "Maid of Walkherd," that is, his wife. When he escaped from the asylum in 1841 and walked hungry and with torn feet towards home, day after day, he awoke at night thinking he heard the name "Mary." In the frenzy of weariness he

hummed "Highland Mary," and as he lay down at night and got up in the morning blessed his "two wives and both their families." He heard again "the old story" that Mary had been dead six years, though he had seen her only a year before "as young as ever." He wrote to Mary as if she had been alive, and he wrote many poems to her, nearly all happy with assured but unsatisfied affection. In these poems of the asylum he sings of a gipsy maid, probably recalling the days when he was familiar with gipsies. As he hummed "Highland Mary," when doubtless he was thinking of Mary Joyce, so in those poems he sometimes loves one with no mortal name and identity, a dark and lovely maiden

> Whose name I sought in vain—
> Some call her pretty Lucy,
> And others honest Jane.

Though he is precise enough to mention the print of Mary's pattens upon the stile, and the mole on her neck, there is no taint upon the verses of what had intervened between their first meeting and this meeting of spirit and flesh in the asylum. One who did not know might suppose that the poems were "all fancy," though he would not be able to give us the meaning of these two words. In the face of these things it is bold to do more

than smile at even so astonishing a conceit as Donne's "Flea," where he bids his mistress spare the "three lives" in the one flea who has sucked the blood of both and so become their "marriage temple"; and it is unwise to dismiss as "the perfectly contented and serene record of an illicit, and doubtless of an ephemeral, adventure," the same poet's "Good-Morrow" beginning:

> I wonder, by my troth, what thou and I
> Did, till we loved? Were we not wean'd till then?
> But suck'd on country pleasures, childishly?
> Or snorted we in the Seven Sleepers' den?

The silhouette of distant trees against the half-risen red moon seen once may outlast in the mind the high moon of a week of nights, and a wanton night may have more to do with poetry than a golden-wedding reached in serenity. Drayton himself once turned upon possible critics who should say, "This man is not in love," and retorted:

> Ye shallow Censures! sometimes see ye not,
> In greatest perils, some men pleasant be;
> Where Fame by death is only to be got,
> They resolute! So stands the case with me.
> Where other men, in depth of Passion cry;
> I laugh at Fortune, as in jest to die!

He was only in high spirits when he wrote:

Get up and let us see
What Beauty it shall be
That Fortune us assigns.

The test to apply is whether it is poetry or not. If so, thank God for it; if not, leave it; and remember that the hour when we can exclaim: "O Love how art thou tired out with rhyme," as Margaret Newcastle did, is not the hour for poetry.

There are several poems in which the division is marked between what most people call "the facts" on the one hand, and what they call "poetry" on the other. They contain a more or less solid body of experience involved in what the poet has used to take it out of time, which we shall regard as decoration or not according to its merit. One of the best and simplest of these is "The Kingis Quair," or "King's Book" of King James the First of Scotland. He was taken prisoner by the English at the age of ten, in 1405, when he was on the way to school in France. He spent the next twenty years in English prisons, chiefly at Windsor Castle and the Tower of London. At a window of Windsor Castle in the spring of 1423 he saw Joan Beaufort, daughter of the Earl of Somerset, walking by. He fell in love with her and during the spring wrote "The Kingis Quair." Next year he married her in April, returned

to Scotland and received his crown in May. Thirteen years later he was assassinated and she wounded by conspirators. He had no mistresses and no bastards. His queen married again within two years of his death.

Only one other poem that we know is certainly his, "A Ballad of Good Counsel" in close imitation of Chaucer's "Fle fro the presse and dwel with sothfastnesse." It lays stress upon the statement that the careful virtuous man is rewarded:

> Love most thy God that first thy love began,
> And for ilk inch he will thee quit a span.

"The Kingis Quair" is also full of Chaucer's influence, and some passages are quite closely copied. His looking out of the castle window at Joan Beaufort reminds us of Palamon and Arcite first beholding Emelye. When he has seen her he lifts his face to the sky and speaks seven verses to Venus. He very soon goes far afield in dream—into the palace of Venus who grants his request that she will help him to see the maiden again; into the palace of Minerva who tells him that he can only succeed if his love be virtuous. Returning to earth he comes to Fortune and her wheel, and has to climb it, but she takes him by the ear so earnestly in saying farewell that he awakes. Then a dove brings him good news. If any

should ask why he makes so much stir about so small a matter, he would answer that whosoever has crept out of Hell into Heaven would give one word of gratitude but six or seven of joy—or as it might be put, one word to the occasion and six or seven to the stir of blissful fancy coming after. After a prayer to Venus and thanks to the gods, Fortune, the nightingale, the lucky castle window and the saints of March, and a recommendation of his book to the poems of Gower and Chaucer, those poets laureate superlative in morality and eloquence, he comes to an end. To us the central experience is everything—the strong unhappy king, looking out of the prison window and seeing the golden-haired maiden in rich attire trimmed with pearls, rubies, emeralds and sapphires, a chaplet of red, white and blue feathers on her head, a heart-shaped ruby on a chain of fine gold hanging over her white throat, her dress looped up carelessly to walk in that fresh morning of nightingales in the new-leaved thickets—she in her youth, loveliness and meek carriage, and her little dog with his bells to be envied because he plays at her side. The nightingale stops singing. He dares not clap his hands to make it go on lest it should fly off; if he does nothing it will sleep; if he calls out it will not understand; and he begs the wind to

shake the leaves and awake the song. And the bird sings again. Some have tried to show that the description of Joan Beaufort was borrowed from Chaucer's "Court of Love," but Professor Skeat says it was not. That "The Kingis Quair," even where it is closely related to experience, bears a close resemblance to other poetry of the age, takes away neither from our enjoyment nor from the genuineness of the poem. A little more conventionalisation and all might be over, but as it is, abstracted from the life of one May morning without losing the breath of life, the central descriptive stanzas remain not merely to leaven the whole but to justify the whole. Joan Beaufort's dress, the nightingale singing, the little dog with the bells, but also the prayer to Venus, the dream, and the white dove, were all in the same world to King James. We may not care for these other things, but that is because he was not great enough poet to make us care. It is not the work of a great imagination : even the figure of Joan is not created simply out of King James's words and rhythms, but has need of the reader's charity to lend it just that help from real life which made it so vivid a thing to the poet, writing there at Windsor, in the very spring of the maiden's apparition.

Most will find it easier to like such a poem

after learning something of its foundation of truth. The most threadbare old poem would suddenly rise in value if we knew as much of its origin. How, for example, would "Greensleeves" gain! Suppose one of the delving race to come upon the portrait of a girl who ought to have waited for Frederick Sandys to catch the full anger of her eyes, the pride of her lips and trusses of yellow hair, and it was "Greensleeves," with her full name written underneath. Or suppose it was a series of letters to another woman about nothing but hounds except that in a postscript, she quotes the first verse of the newest song her late lover had sent her—

> Alas, my love, you do me wrong
> To cast me off discourteously;
> And I have lovèd you so long,
> Delighting in your company.
> Greensleeves was all my joy,
> Greensleeves was my delight,
> Greensleeves was my heart of gold,
> And who but Lady Greensleeves?

Many would remember that Shakespeare and Pepys knew "Greensleeves," and that they themselves had heard the tune as children and that it was a pretty name. Every verse would start to life which the lover wrote in complaint—

> My men were clothèd all in green,
> And they did ever wait on thee;
> All this was gallant to be seen,
> And yet thou wouldst not love me.
>
> Greensleeves, &c.

How his men waited upon her everywhere, how he sent her dainties every morning, how she had all that she could desire and music to play and sing, and it was he that paid for all this gear, and yet she would not love him. It has a beautiful, a most gallant mournful melody, and it half creates her every time it is sung—the wildest and loveliest creature in a whole county up to her angry eyes in foxgloves and to her waist in fern, and laughing as shrill and as little like a woman as a woodpecker. And the music stops and she disappears. The words alone will not yield her up. It has no discoverable associations for me, and yet upon sweet lips it is—well, nearly—the dearest of English love-songs. Perhaps the man who wrote it was not her lover at all, but a drunken fiddler who had lain out in the gossamer all a summer night, until the sun was high up and the larks ceaseless and indistinguishable in their medley. Then something not so loud as a snake passed him in the grass, and he leapt up to his feet, the cobwebs of years suddenly cleared from his eyes, to see her

nodding to herself in passing him and looking his way but not seeing him; so that he burst out into tears and threw himself upon the grass. There he struggled awhile and lay still lest he should begin to think again, until he rose up swiftly and ran, but she was gone; she also had run, out of mere wantonness, none knew where; and thus he made at the same time the song and the melody of Greensleeves.

The men who write for music are the most difficult of all, the Elizabethan, Thomas Campion, for example, one of the greatest of them. Practically nothing is known about his life and nature. Mr. Percival Vivian, his latest editor, thinks that he was one of those "in whom friendship rises almost to the level of a passion," and also that "the divinities addressed in the Latin poems were no creatures of the imagination." But it takes a lifetime to discriminate between truth and convention in Latin verses. We may take it, however, that he was an amorous man. He probably died a bachelor. The range of his English songs from unmoving conventionality to what looks like perfectly ripened passionate utterance is very wide. He works much in the proverbial and worldly view of women, saying, for example—

She hath more beauty than becomes the chaste.

This may mean nothing more than that he wished to be thought licentious and proud of it. The difficulty is always complicated by the fact that he could rely upon his airs to correct or eke out the effect of his words. Yet what seems the very language and cadence of a profound emotion, remembered or even still present, often breaks the suavity and nullity of Campion's average verse. A song begins: "Come, you pretty false-eyed wanton, leave your crafty smiling," and we are prepared for a frivolous show of possibly illicit courting and no more; but the third verse begins:

> Would it were dumb midnight now,
> When all the world is sleeping;
> Would this place some Desert were,
> Which no man hath in keeping—

and the voice is that of a man and not of a songster. There is a magical reality thrust upon us, a whole clear-lit scene, by the opening words of another:

> Sleep, angry beauty, sleep and fear not me.

The rest is nothing: he has left the music to hold us if possible upon the plane of those eight words, and whether he had Mellea or Caspia or Chloe or Meroe in his mind,

who knows? There is a poem where a woman sings and says at last:

> . . . Till then, for Hope's sweet sake, rest your tir'd mind,
> And not so much as see me in the street.

Here he seems to forget the song and to recall some experience of London. He has a score of openings such as might set a lover's feet at once upon the path of desire—"When to her lute Corinna sings," for example; "Follow your saint, follow with accents sweet" is one; others are "When thou must home to shades of underground," "Never weather-beaten sail more willing beat to shore," "Shall I come, sweet Love, to thee, when the evening beams are set," "There is a garden in her face." Of these, "Never weather-beaten sail" is from a sacred song. Love, woman perhaps, but not a woman, inspires his wandering emotion. Led on by rhyme and by cadence, he uses loving phrases rather as if he were dreaming upon the strings of an instrument than devoting it to one constant end. Cupid's fire, beauty unrelenting, myrtle arbours, traitorous kisses, rosy cheeks, deceit and beauty, roses and white lilies, are portions of a mosaic arranged in half-wanton seriousness, broken once and again by a phrase like "O then we both will sit

in some unhaunted shade" where he seems to have forgotten to play. He leaves it to singer or reader to fit them to a mood of constancy, and to find that there is none which they will not fit. Only, nothing is here for the abandonment of simple passion, for the bridal of the virgin priestess on the solitary island crags who has found her love there in a stranger saved from the waters—

O joy, when dimly, at last beholds each one,
The other's semblant, in this doubtful gloom.
Then whispered speech, sweet knitting of true palms,
Already knit their hearts. Her mantle, warm,
Of wadmel, then she splayed about them both.
They creep together, in that fear and cold,
In dim sea-cave. Smiles out, in firmament,
The hoary girdled, infinite, night of stars
Above them: like as when, in sweet spring-time,
With wind-flowers white, some glade is storied seen;
Whereas, from part to part, like silver stream,
Shine hemlocks, stitchworts, sign of former path.
To her innocent bosom, she him gathers, warm;
And girded, each, of other's palms, they sleep.
But Cloten, waking, spread, to heaven, his palms,
Calling high gods to witness of his truth;
His being, knit to this nymph, for life and death.
O'ermuch she travailled hath, to-day, and run;
Nor, child, wist, risen, she hath known a man:
Yet feels that new in her, as were unmeet,
She as tofore, on Sena's sacred hearth,
Wait; wherefore gan she weep; but fears him wake.

It is strange to think that in that first great age of English poetry such blissful simplicity of painting was impossible to men who had loved women, and that it was left to be accomplished in our time by Mr. Doughty.

Chapter Six: Mothers of Poets

COWPER was born in 1731, his mother having been a Miss Donne, probably of the same Welsh family as the poet Donne. She died in 1737. Fifty-two years later, in 1790, his long-absent cousin, Mrs. Bodham, formerly Anne or "Rose" Donne, sent him his mother's picture. He wrote to his familiar cousin, Lady Hesketh, telling her that he had rather possess this picture than the richest jewel in the British crown. He remembered his mother well enough to know that the portrait bore a very exact resemblance: he loved her "with an affection that her death, fifty-two years since, has not in the least abated." To Mrs. Bodham he wrote on the following day, February 27, 1790:

> Every creature that bears any affinity to my mother is dear to me, and you, the daughter of her brother, are but one remove distant from her: I love you, therefore, and love you much, both for her sake and for your own. The world could not have furnished you with a present so acceptable to me, as the picture which you have so kindly sent me. I received it the night before last, and viewed it with a trepidation of nerves and spirits somewhat akin to what I should have felt had the dear original presented herself to my embraces. I kissed it, and hung it where it is the last object that I see at night, and, of course, the first on which I open my eyes in the morning.

. . . There is in me, I believe, more of the Donne than of the Cowper; and though I love all of both names, and have a thousand reasons to love those of my own name, yet I feel the bond of nature draw me to your side. I was thought in the days of my childhood much to resemble my mother; and in my natural temper, of which at the age of fifty-eight I must be supposed to be a competent judge, can trace both her and my late uncle, your father. Somewhat of his irritability; and a little, I would hope, both of his and her —— I know not what to call it, without seeming to praise myself, which is not my intention, but speaking to you, I will even speak out, and say *good nature.*

(Cowper was fond of remembering that he was a Donne, how that he was of the same family as John Donne, and how that he was Welsh in his touchiness.) Upon this occasion he wrote his finest and almost his best known lines, "On the receipt of my mother's picture out of Norfolk." He recalls how his servants tried to quiet his sorrow at her death by telling him she would return . . . recalls

The nightly visits to my chamber made,
That thou mightst know me safe and warmly laid:
The morning bounties ere I left my home,
The biscuit or confectionery plum;
The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestowed
By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and
  glowed;
All this, and more endearing still than all,
Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,
Ne'er roughened by those cataracts and breaks
That humour interposed too often makes. . . .

and how

> When playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers,
> The violet, the pink, and jessamine,
> I pricked them into paper with a pin
> (And thou wast happier than myself the while,
> Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head and smile).

It was of her that he thought when he replied in "The Task" to the imaginary question: "What's the world to you?"

> Much. I was born of woman, and drew milk,
> As sweet as charity, from human breasts,
> I think, articulate, I laugh and weep,
> And exercise all functions of a man.
> How then should I and any man that lives
> Be strangers to each other? . . .

To state the influence of such a relationship is impossible. The explicit evidence is very little concerning Cowper's mother or the mothers of most other English poets. Who was Chaucer's? We know that she was probably named Agnes, and that she married again after her husband's death, Geoffrey Chaucer being then a man and in the service of the King, Edward III. He was not eminently a "mother's son" as some poets are. Spenser, perhaps, was, but we only know that his mother's name was Elizabeth. Not

more is to be learned of Mary Arden, Shakespeare's mother, though Mr. Frank Harris concludes from "Coriolanus" that the poet "held her in extraordinary esteem and affection, and mourned her after her death as 'the noblest mother in the world.'" Sidney's mother, being a Dudley, a daughter of the great Duke of Northumberland, we know better. She had a masculine firmness of character and weight of mind, and a woman's endurance and submission. She was in every way the equal of her husband, Sir Henry Sidney, Elizabeth's Lord-Deputy of Ireland, and Sir Philip rightly held it to be his chief honour that he was a Dudley. She was a woman of equal courage, intelligence and fortitude, and it was her fortune to display them always at the side of her husband in his difficult task of serving the Queen and governing Ireland and Wales. She died in the same year as Sir Henry and Sir Philip, following her husband, followed by her son. Not even the name is remembered of Drayton's mother, through whom he may have had the Welsh blood of the not improbable report. Marston had an "Italian and probably Catholic mother," but what mothers had Marlowe and Nashe? Lodge wrote an epitaph on his mother in 1579, but it has disappeared.

Donne's mother is more clear to us if we may believe Walton. She was a Heywood of the blood of Sir Thomas More, and like her husband a Catholic, and as he died when the child was three her influence was single. She did not allow the nurse to whip him for faults, but had them reported to herself. She and her friends were careful of his education, and gave him tutors in "the mathematics and in all the other liberal sciences," and in "the principles of the Romish church; of which these tutors professed, though secretly, themselves to be members." But he was at Oxford in his eleventh year, and removed to Cambridge in his fourteenth. He says himself that study diverted his tendency to the Roman faith before he was twenty. Mr. Gosse holds the opinion that after he went to London, about 1590, at the age of seventeen, he "found himself free from his mother's tutelage," and his attachment to that faith declined. But in 1616 he wrote that whatever he could do for her was a debt to her "from whom I had that education which must make my fortune." She survived him, a second time a widow, until 1632, and he left her provided for.

Magdalen Newport, the mother of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury and of George Herbert, is distinct both as the mother and

the friend of poets. She was born in or about 1565, and bore ten children, Edward Herbert in 1583 and George in 1593. Her husband, Richard Herbert, died in 1597. Her son Edward says that she "brought up her children carefully and put them in good courses for making their fortunes," not marrying again until 1608, but "proposing to herself as her principal care the education of her children." Her second husband, Sir John Danvers, proved a considerate step-father.

When Edward Herbert was twelve he was taken with some of his brothers to Oxford, where their mother lived with them. She gave him a tutor, but "still kept him in a moderate awe of herself, and so much under her own eye as to see and converse with him daily; but she managed this power over him without any such rigid sourness as might make her company a torment to her child; but with such a sweetness and compliance with the recreations and pleasures of youth as did incline him willingly to spend much of his time in the company of his dear and careful mother." And though Edward married soon after, he and his wife remained in the same house with his mother until he was about eighteen, when he had one child. At Oxford "her great and harmless wit, her cheerful gravity, and her obliging behaviour"

gained her the friendship of men of worth or learning, and particularly John Donne. The year of her second marriage was George Herbert's first at Cambridge. It was also in 1608 that he sent his mother a letter, declaring that his "poor abilities in poetry" were to be "consecrated to God's glory," and enclosing the poem which asks:

> My God, where is that ancient heat towards thee
> Wherewith whole shoals of Martyrs once did burn
> Besides their other flames? Doth poetry
> Wear Venus' livery? only serve her turn? . . .

She kept him to the University at a time when he inclined to travel—"yet he would by no means satisfy his own devices at so dear a rate as to prove an undutiful son to so affectionate a mother; but did always submit to her wisdom." When he was thirty and Public Orator at Cambridge, he wrote her a letter to fortify her in sickness, which may be taken as some proof of an honest as well as a dignified understanding between mother and son. In 1626 he became Prebendary of Layton Ecclesia in Huntingdonshire, and proposed to restore the church. His mother feared for the great trouble and charge of the undertaking and sent for him to Chelsea, saying:

> George, I sent for you to persuade you to commit a wrong, by giving your patron as good a gift

as he gave you: namely, that you give him back his prebend: for, George, it is not for your weak body and empty purse to undertake to build Churches.

But he begged her to allow him "at the age of thirty-three years to become an undutiful son," and she became a subscriber to the fund and procured another.

The year before this, 1625, is the year to which Mr. Gosse attributes Donne's poem upon Lady Danvers, "The Autumnal Beauty"—

> No spring, nor summer beauty hath such grace
> As I have seen in one autumnal face . . .
> Here where still evening is, not noon, nor night;
> Where no voluptuousness, yet all delight.

Two years later she died, and Donne pronounced her funeral oration, praising her for her cheerfulness, wit and godliness, her hospitality and her almsgiving to the deserving and the undeserving. With this sermon were published the Latin and Greek poems written in her honour by George Herbert, enumerating her virtues of modesty, religion, orderly domesticity, grace and liberality, her mastery of the pen; and "thine," he says, "this learning is, which I derived from thee." Piety was not above flattery, but it seems clear that Herbert felt her power as a very real presence. He was much more her son

than the black Lord Edward Herbert, conspicuously a Welshman as enemies let him know, a vain bold man, independent in thought and action, chiefly remembered now for his own account of his horsemanship, unconquerable skill as a duellist, and personal charm.

Pope was the only child of his mother, who was forty-six years old, like her husband, at his birth in 1688. She lived until 1733 an entirely fond mother, and he responded to her with an affection stronger than he ever had for any one else and quite untroubled. He allowed her to copy portions of his translation of Homer for the press in spite of her unorthodoxy in spelling. His words upon her death are the only sweet words he ever wrote except when he mentioned her in life:

> I thank God her death was as easy as her life was innocent; and as it cost her not a groan, nor even a sigh, there is yet upon her countenance such an expression of tranquillity, nay, almost of pleasure, that it is even enviable to behold it. It would afford the finest image of a saint expired that ever painter drew, and it would be the greatest obligation which ever that obliging art could ever bestow upon a friend, if you would come and sketch it for me. I am sure if there be no very prevalent obstacle, you will leave any common business to do this, and I shall hope to see you this evening as late as you will, or to-morrow morning as early, before this winter flower is faded.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

Mrs. Cowper.
Mother of the Poet.
(From the Painting by D. Heins)

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Gray had a brutal and half-mad father, a rich man who would yet not pay for his son's education. The poet was the only child reared by Dorothy Gray though she bore twelve. She and her elder sister kept a milliner's shop to make money for the boy's expenses at Eton and Peterhouse, Cambridge, and she asked a lawyer in vain for some hope of protection from the husband who threatened to turn the sister out of the shop. The mother's devotion was to the son, not the poet, of whom she knew nothing, and he answered it with tenderness, constancy and self-sacrifice. She died in 1753, when her son was thirty-six. He was at her bedside, and dreadful as the scene was,—

> "I know," he wrote, "I am the better for it. We are all idle and thoughtless things, and have no sense, no use in the world any longer than that sad impression lasts; the deeper it is engraved the better."

He wrote upon her tombstone at Stoke Poges this epitaph:

> In the same pious confidence, beside her friend and sister, here sleep the remains of Dorothy Gray, widow, the careful tender mother of many children, one of whom alone had the misfortune to survive her.

Of Blake's mother we know practically nothing except that when, as a child, he came

home with the story of seeing a tree on Peckham Rye, "filled with angels, bright angelic wings bespangling every bough like stars," his mother saved him from his honest father's thrashing. But on a similar occasion she whipped him herself. Crabbe's mother probably played a similar part, for her husband was an ill-tempered and intemperate man, and she was a religious woman some years his senior, and often an invalid. Chatterton was a posthumous child, brought up entirely by his mother. Shelley's mother intervened for him against Sir Timothy. She had more sense than her husband and was more tolerant, though her tolerance was raised upon foundations resembling those of the neighbouring "fish and pheasant ladies" as Shelley calls them. She intercepted a rash letter from Shelley to his father when he had been sent down from Oxford, and she sent him money for his expenses. Had he been able to suffer her "irresistible eloquence" on the subject of the weather he would have loved her and understood her more; but she either had no sympathy with his ideas and affections or could not express it in a way to move Shelley. He supposed she must have thought him mad at school when she did not reply to a letter describing his discussions on love with a friend; she was, he thought, quite rational

and even liberal, and he quoted as a proof of it her words: "I think *prayer* and thanksgiving are of no use. If a man is a good man, philosopher, or Christian, he will do very well in whatever future state awaits us." Shelley was emotional rather than affectionate, and, though he sent his mother "love" and his father "sentiments of respect," he probably lost all conscious thought of his mother when he had taken his own path and satisfied himself that she was only a spirit somewhere between the evil and the foolish spirits who tormented him. Landor's mother, like Shelley's, wished him to live as a country gentleman. She, too, had sense, but not much power of expression except through the affections. She begged him to take care of his health and not to hurt his eyes or rack his brains too much over books for the world's amusement. His Latin poetry she understood to be good in the eyes of judges, but "one cannot read it, to understand it, oneself."

Wordsworth's mother died when he was eight. She was Anne Cookson, a mercer's daughter of Penrith. He remembered her "pinning a nosegay to my breast when I was going to say the Catechism in the church, as was customary before Easter," and a friend told him she once said that he was the

only one of her five children who made her anxious, and "he would be remarkable either for good or evil." The cause of which prophecy was, says Wordsworth, "that I was of a stiff, moody and violent temper." In the Prelude he speaks of the infant who "with his soul drinks in the feelings of his Mother's eye," and tells how

> By intercourse of touch
> I held mute dialogues with my Mother's heart.

And on a later page he calls her "the heart and hinge of all our learnings and our loves," one "not falsely taught,

> Fetching her goodness rather from times past,
> Than shaping novelties for times to come,
> Had no presumption, no such jealousy,
> Nor did by habit of her thoughts mistrust
> Our nature, but had virtual faith that He
> Who fills the mother's breast with innocent milk,
> Doth also for our nobler part provide,
> Under His great correction and control,
> As innocent instincts, and as innocent food;
> Or draws for minds that are left free to trust
> In the simplicities of opening life
> Sweet honey out of spurned or dreaded weeds . . .
> . . . Pure
> From anxious fear of error or mishap,
> And evil, overweeningly so-called;
> Was not puffed up by false unnatural hopes,
> Nor selfish with unnecessary cares,
> Nor with impatience from the season asked
> More than its timely produce; rather loved

The hours for what they are, than from regard
Glanced on their promises in restless pride.
Such was she—not from faculties more strong
Than others have, but from the times, perhaps,
And spot in which she lived, and through a grace
Of modest meekness, simple-mindedness,
A heart that found benignity and hope,
Being itself benign. . . .

There is a certain complacency in the passage, characteristic of Wordsworth, and perhaps permissible in a son who had at the time of writing almost reached the age of his dead mother. He evidently saw in her another of those fine serviceable women in whom he was singularly blessed.

Keats' mother is a little less a shadow. Her husband, Thomas Keats, died when the poet was nine, and she married again in the next year, but separated from her second husband very early and lived with her mother and her children until her death by a consumption in 1810. She was a tall woman with "a large oval face and a somewhat saturnine demeanour," and Keats took after his father in physical appearance. Keats tended her in her sickness, sitting up all night with her, reading novels to her, and allowing nobody else to give her medicine or cook her food, and when she died he hid himself "for several days" under his schoolmaster's desk, and gave way to his grief.

Family affection was strong in those of Keats' blood, and could not but have owed much to the mother. It had little enough to do in appearance with John Keats' poetry, but it nourished the soil out of which it grew. The chief influences of our lives are unconscious, just as the best of our best work is; and the influence of the mother upon the poet is mainly unconscious even when she is a woman of intelligence as well as power and sense like Lady Mary Sidney or Magdalen Herbert, perhaps not less so than when she is a woman of altogether traditional wisdom like Anne Wordsworth, or of conspicuous conventions and inarticulate character like Mary Shelley or Mrs. Landor.

Chapter Seven: Poets and Friendly Women

THE earliest poetry of men of our country suggests the influence of women at many points. Women stand for home, peace, and the arts and graces of peace, in the fighting ages. When Beowulf comes to the land of Hrothgar, King of the East Danes, to rid him of the demon Grendel, the Queen Wealtheow takes the cup round the Hall at the welcoming. She is noble minded, with many gold rings, and first she gives the cup to her lord, and next to Beowulf. She is as a queen ought to be, light of heart, good in counsel with her lord, and liberal in gifts of horses and treasures. She is there at the thanksgiving to God and Beowulf when Grendel is slain, when Hrothgar stands at the entrance porch of his hall and praises Beowulf, saying that if his mother is yet alive she may well say that God was "gracious to her in her childbearing." Again Waltheow bears the cup; she speaks in the full hall a speech of policy, and gives Beowulf two armlets, a mantle, rings, and a famous collar of twisted gold, bidding him prosper and care for her sons in her court where the nobles are true to one another and to their lord, and where the warriors do her bidding. When

he returns to the country of the Goths, their Queen Hygd, "the peace bond of the peoples," goes up and down the hall cheering the young men with wine from the studded treasure-cup while Beowulf tells his adventures; for she also though very young was wise, well grown, and generous. And Beowulf gives her the gifts of Hrothgar, a curiously-wrought neck ring, and three horses with bright saddles. That the woman had it in her power to be other than meekly gracious is evident from the story of the Queen Thrytho and her pride and violence, so terrible that no warrior except her lord dared look into her eyes by day, and regardless of the fact that it is not queenly for a woman, however mighty, to compass the death of a man who insults her. She lived afterwards to be as famous for her good as for her violence, and loved her lord, Offa, King of the Angles.

A later poem, the "Husband's Message," is of a man dwelling in exile who sends his wife a message on a wooden tablet, asking her to come to him, as soon as the cuckoo sings in the wood, to heal his longing. For he is now in good estate and in high honour, and without her. "The Wife's Complaint" is of a woman deserted by her suspicious husband. He is beyond the sea, and she alone, living in the woods without friends or

friendliness. She asks for his love again, which was once so strong, and thinks that he also may remember their home and their union.

With the advance of civilisation and security the power of the home and of woman increased. But it is long before we have any positive witness to the home-life of an English poet, though nearly all of the English poets have married, and many of them at an early age, perhaps to spite Schopenhauer, who said that celibacy was best for poets, because married life was against creative work. Chaucer's was probably unhappy, and he has left pictures of the love, lust, playfulness, and worldliness, but hardly of the homeliness of women unless in the story of patient Griselda, though he said that there were a thousand good women to one bad, and apologised for telling coarse tales before women.

Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, Sidney's sister, and about six years his junior, is one of the first female relatives of a poet whom we know something like well. She married at sixteen, and Sidney was often and long with her in her home at Wilton. She worked with him at a translation of the Psalms, and J. A. Symonds thought her part, probably all but the first forty-two Psalms, the better in that unsuccessful toil. It was

probably begun during Sidney's visit of 1580. But this was far more remarkable for the beginning of Sidney's "Arcadia"—"The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia" as it is always called, for a reason which Sidney's dedication to his "dear lady and sister" best describes:

"You desired me," he writes, "to do it, and your desire to my heart is an absolute commandment. Now it is done only for you, only to you: if you keep it to yourself, or commend it to such friends who will weigh errors in the balance of goodwill, I hope, for the father's sake, it will be pardoned, perchance, made much of, though in itself it have deformities. For indeed, for severer eyes it is not, being but a trifle, and that triflingly handled. Your dear self can best witness the manner, being done in loose sheets of paper, most of it in your presence; the rest by sheets sent unto you, as fast as they were done. . . ."

A longer labour of love there never was, and to read it requires probably a longer, and means the death of love. The sister revised it and added to it before its publication in 1590, four years after Sidney's death. Her own work proves her perhaps her brother's equal, except in inspiration. She was a woman of vigorous and original character, witty and beautiful, resembling Sir Philip, with "a pretty sharp-oval face" and hair "of a reddish-yellow." Aubrey says that she had

many gallants, and that "she was very salacious, and she had a contrivance that in the spring of the year . . . the stallions . . . were to be brought before such a part of the house, where she had a *vidette* to look on them." He says that Wilton House in her time was "like a College, there were so many learned and ingenious persons." She was a patroness of poets, and mother of William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, and on her death in 1621 she gained from pastoral William Browne the most famous of poetic epitaphs, as "Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother."

Sidney's wife, Frances Walsingham, did not count for much by comparison with the Countess of Pembroke and Penelope Rich, the "Stella" of his sonnets. He married her in 1583, the match pleased the two families, and he may well have been attracted to the personal beauty which procured her as second husband the Earl of Essex, and after his execution, Lord Clanricarde as a third. She bore him a daughter during their union of three years, but he was writing sonnets to the wife of Lord Rich, and it is not probable that he loved Frances Sidney. The only manner in which she can have affected his poetry was by doubling the barrier which stood between him and Stella and so adding to the cause of the sonnets.

Unlike Sidney, Spenser was able to marry the lady who is usually said to be the lady of his sonnets, in 1594. She was Elizabeth Boyle, of whom nothing is known except that she bore Spenser two children and married a second husband after his death. Mr. J. C. Smith is inclined to trace to the courtship and early wedded life the noticeably increased strength and beauty of those portions of the "Faerie Queene" probably written in 1593–5, namely, Books V. and VI. He also suggests that these books were written when Spenser was a father because of the simile of the nurse and infant, Calepine's treatment of the foundling, and so on. Spenser's wife is said to be the "country lass" of "The Faerie Queene," VI. 10, she who—

> So far as doth the daughter of the day
> All other lesser lights in light excel,
> So far doth she in beautiful array,
> Above all other lasses bear the bell,
> No less in virtue that beseems her well,
> Doth she exceed the rest of all her race,
> For which the Graces that here wont to dwell,
> Have for more honour brought her to this place,
> And graced her so much to be another Grace.

There seems no reason, however, why a man of Spenser's facility in poetry and in love should not have written so about any beautiful woman whom he wished to compliment at the

time. "Country lass" may mean no more than "shepherdess." Writing of this kind means that the woman had, or appeared to the poet to have, little in her, or he would have been able to distinguish her, or the effect produced by her, from any other. "The artist," says Coleridge, "must imitate that which is within the thing, that which is active through form and figure, and discourses to us by symbols. . . . This explains why the likeness of a very good portrait is not always recognised; because some persons never abstract, and amongst these are especially to be numbered the near relatives and friends of the subject, in consequence of the constant pressure and check exercised on their minds by the actual presence of the original." There are no musts in art, but only an infinite may; yet if Spenser imitated what was within this "country lass" there was not much. This passage, like so much early poetry written at an age when women grew more rapidly old, and depended for their power over man mainly on their virgin beauty, reflects chiefly the amorous stir in the lover and is entirely egotistical. The same must be said of the "Amoretti," the love sonnets to Elizabeth Boyle; it has, however, to be tempered by the facts, first, that a very young girl is likely to be colourless, and secondly, that Spenser

was writing according to poetical tradition. The sonnets were perhaps sent to her ; at least the leaves on which they were written were addressed :

> Happy, ye leaves! when as those lily hands,
> Which hold my life in their dead-doing might,
> Shall handle you, and hold in love's soft bands,
> Like captives trembling at the victor's might.

They were said to be inspired by her, and there is no reason to doubt the essential truth of the sextet of the eighth :

> You frame my thoughts and fashion me within ;
> You stop my tongue, and teach my heart to speak ;
> You calm the storm that passion did begin,
> Strong through your cause, but by your virtue weak.
> Dark is the world, where your light shined never:
> Well is he born, that may behold you ever.

How much is poetical tradition and how much individual feeling cannot be discriminated in any of them, but "Coming to kiss her lips," *e.g.* with its list of her physical charms and their fragrances, her eyes "like pinks but newly spread," her bosom "like a strawberry-bed," is presumably all artifice in the taste of the age, though perhaps inspired by the girl's own "sweet odour" that "did them all excel." The sonnets most pleasant to read are those

which have some other interest than this conceited amorousness, as for example "Like as a huntsman," with its charming simile for her wildness—she is like the deer that comes to drink at the brook where the tired and baffled huntsman lies, and does not seek to fly but lets him take her by hand. The phrase at the end of "Lacking in love" is perhaps significant of the self-absorbed nature of Spenser's love:

> Cease then, mine eyes, to seek her self to see;
> And let my thoughts behold her self in me.

She supplied the impulse to use the material and colouring in just this way. But the "Epithalamion" is the greatest compliment of all to Spenser's bride, that she could unloose and guide a rapture of such exuberant and yet perfectly controlled loveliness. It is mere vanity to say a word about the standards of an age that made this glorious poem possible. Nevertheless, if passages like that where the bride blushes at the altar, with eyes cast down,

> Governed with goodly modesty,
> That suffers not one look to glance away
> Which may let in a little thought unsound,

—if this were true, the woman was scarce more than a piece of exquisite flesh which stung

Spenser to excellent results. But this would make the wonder of the poem too incredible since flesh alone can but move flesh, and even flesh daunted and denied could not turn inward and produce the "Epithalamion." The hope of an heir gives it further dignity and reminds us yet again that the age was one far from ours. It was in fact an age that dared to consider the flesh more than we have done until recent years. Nor does our theology and cosmogony matter when the fire of poetry consumes an old theology and cosmogony in the service of love's truth—in the final stanza:

> And ye bright heavens, the temple of the gods,
> In which a thousand torches flaming bright
> Do burn, that to us wretched earthly clods
> In dreadful darkness lend desired light;
> And all ye powers which in the same remain,
> More than we men can fain!
> Pour out your blessing on us plenteously,
> And happy influence on us rain,
> That we may raise a large posterity,
> Which from the earth, which they may long possess
> With lasting happiness,
> Up to your haughty palaces may mount,
> And for the guerdon of their glorious merit,
> May heavenly tabernacles there inherit,
> Of blessed Saints for to increase the count.
> So let us rest, sweet love, in hope of this,
> And cease till then our timely joys to sing:
> The woods no more us answer, nor our echo ring!

So much, perhaps, must be attributed to the inspiration of his love as may account for the difference between this "Epithalamion" of 1594 and the noble "Prothalamion" of 1596 written for the marriage of the Earl of Worcester's two daughters, who were nothing to him. The "Epithalamion" is the finest of Spenser's work, having all the sensuousness of the best parts of "The Faerie Queene" together with an impulse which that poem usually lacks; the "Prothalamion" has everything but this annealing impulse.

Donne's wife is, perhaps, the most famous of all poets' wives. He married her secretly in 1601 when he was twenty-eight, and had spent his youth possibly in licentiousness, and certainly in writing love poetry which is often licentious. For a time the excess of passion perhaps dulled his fire, but such was her power and their love that after the union he wrote several of his finest poems to her. Walton tells a story of how he had a vision of her when he was abroad in 1611 and 1612 against her will, and she lay in childbed in England. "I have seen," he told his companion, "I have seen my dead wife pass twice by me through this room, with her hair hanging about her shoulders, and a dead child in her arms." There is no reason to doubt this vision though the account of

the circumstances may be erroneous or incomplete. Mrs. Donne had a "divining soul," and Walton compares the sympathy between them to that of two lutes, which "being both strung and tuned to an equal pitch, and then one played upon, the other that is not touched being laid upon a table at a fit distance, will (like an echo to a trumpet) warble a faint inaudible harmony in answer to the same tune." In the beautiful "Elegy on his mistress" Donne bade her stay safe in England while he went abroad (probably in 1606, thinks Mr. Gosse), and in fancying what anxiety might create in her imagination thus concluded:

When I am gone, dream me some happiness;
Nor let thy looks our long-hid love confess:
Nor praise, nor dispraise me, nor bless nor curse
Openly love's force, nor in bed fright thy nurse
With midnight's startings, crying out, O! O!
Nurse, O! my love is slain; I saw him go
O'er the white Alps alone; I saw him, I,
Assail'd, fight, taken, stabb'd, bleed, fall, and die.
Augur me better chance, except dread Jove
Think it enough for me to have had thy love.

Mrs. Donne, then twenty-one years old, had apparently wished to come with him and had offered to dress as a page so as to be as little encumbrance as possible. Mr. E. K. Chambers refers to the same occasion the song beginning:

Sweetest love, I do not go,
  For weariness of thee,
Nor in hope the world can show
  A fitter love for me ;
    But since that I
At the last must part, 'tis best,
Thus to use myself in jest
    By feignèd deaths to die.

It was Donne's distinction to be the first after Shakespeare, and almost at the same time as Shakespeare, to write love poems in English which bear the undeniable signs not only of love but one moment of love and for one particular woman. His poems to his wife are of the same kind. There is none of the old-fashioned generalisation in them at all.

The married life of the Donnes was one of great misery. They married against her father's wish, though there had been "so much of promise and contract as, without violence to conscience, might not be shaken." They "adventured equally" knowing their obligations, said Donne. The father, Sir George More, was furiously angry: "I humbly beg you," wrote Donne, "that she may not, to her danger, feel the terror of your sudden anger." By his action, Donne was dismissed from his place as secretary to her uncle, Sir Thomas Egerton, the Lord-Keeper. Donne was ill and in despair and

for a short time in prison, for the marriage was an offence against the Canon and the Common Law. Gradually the father relented, and the marriage was confirmed by the Court of the Archbishop of Canterbury; but not until 1608 did he allow them adequate means of support. Donne and his wife stayed with a cousin at Pirford from 1602 to 1604. Two children were born in those years. A third followed in 1605, and they then settled at Mitcham. Mrs. Donne continued to bear children in poverty to a perplexed and unhappy husband, who wrote during her dangerous travail in 1607 that it was the worst night he had ever spent, and had she died he could not but have joined her in death. In the spring of 1608 he saw everything revive, but himself withering and growing "older and not better." He would not yet accept the advice to enter the church. He was in a small house, writing close to three gamesome children and to the wife from whom he had to conceal his wretchedness. His wretchedness in this "hospital" of home with wife and children was as complete as the peasant John Clare's, who wept bitterly at the birth of his seventh child and ran out into the fields, not to return until he was brought back insensible the next night and for weeks unable to leave bed. Again in

1608 Mrs. Donne was expecting to have a child, but she and all the children fell ill and they "lost half a child"; he alone was well, but so poor that if the sick children died he knew not how to pay for their burial; he flattered himself with the hope that he also was dying. He wrote "Biathanatos" defending self-homicide, and was comforted to know that he had "the keys of his prison in his own hand." At last came the provision of about £800 a year (of our money) from Sir George More.

Mrs. Donne lost two, perhaps three, children, and bore one, in 1614. Money had not done everything. Donne's Muse, he said, was dead, though he had begun writing on the death of Elizabeth Drury in 1610, and composed in 1613 an epithalamium for Lord Rochester and Frances Howard (then still the wife of the Earl of Essex). He got no appointment in return, and was unable to choose between the Church and the Law, which was Rochester's suggestion. His one consolation was his wife, and though he said at one moment that he was none the less alone for being in the midst of his family, yet he said at another that what company he could give her she should have—"we had not one another at so cheap a rate, as that we should ever be weary of one another"—for he

had the relief of books from solitariness, but she had none.

He was ordained and made chaplain to James I. in 1615, the year of his eleventh child's birth. 1616 gave him two Rectories and the Divinity Readership at Lincoln's Inn, where he preached some of his great sermons. In the next year his wife died at the birth of her twelfth child, stillborn. She left seven alive, and Donne promised them never to marry again, "burying with his tears all his earthly joys in his most dear and deserving wife's grave." These seventeen years of marriage were years of love, but also of agony and preparation. In poetry they produced most if not all of the epistles, the poems on Elizabeth Drury, and the few poems to his wife. But they meant everything to him as a divine. Only such a passion as that for Anne More could have kept him to poverty and the wilderness all those years. And such a passion and such suffering produced from Donne's sensuous and sensual nature the holy flowers of the sermons and the divine poems.

It does not appear that Edward Herbert was much influenced by the wife whom he married to please two families, at fourteen. She bore him children and he was faithful to her for ten years, he says, that is until he

went abroad and she refused to follow him. His brother, George Herbert, married Jane Danvers at thirty-five, only three days after his first interview with her, according to Walton. She had fallen in love with him before seeing him. She made a humble and devoted parson's wife during the five years remaining to him, and married again, being childless, after six years of widowhood. The marriage, in 1629, followed four years after the destruction of his court hopes and his resolve to enter the Church. Only a few months passed before Herbert received the Rectory which settled him at Bemerton, the scene of his most admired activities as saint and country parson. Probably "The Temple" was written there when his chief company was his wife. As a youth of seventeen he had dedicated to God instead of to Venus his poetic gifts. His divine poems show a love of God and of holy things that has a married sobriety rather than the rapture of courtship, such as may be found in Crashaw and Vaughan. His view of human marriage itself may perhaps be gathered from the words of "The Church Porch":

> Abstain wholly, or wed. Thy bounteous Lord
> Allows thee choice of paths: take no by-ways;
> But gladly welcome what he doth afford;
> Not grudging, that thy lust hath bounds and stays.

Continence hath his joy : weigh both ; and so
If rottenness have more, let Heaven go.

He wished to deny to mortal love the sole praise of stimulating the heart and brain of a man to "invention," and it was in deliberate competition with mortal love-poetry that he wrote the divine poems. But it will happen that his best verses are full of colour gained from the stores of amorous poetry. He asks the question :

Is it no verse, except enchanted groves
And sudden arbours shadow coarse-spun lines ?

And in "I envy," he says :

I envy no man's nightingale or spring ;
Nor let them punish me with loss of rhyme,
Who plainly say, *My God*, *My King*.

But when he praises "Church-music," it is for all the world like a mortal lover, and the beautiful "sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright" has to call upon the comparison of a bridal in its first verse. It was, according to "The Pearl," in spite of his senses that he felt heavenly love, and that poem would have been nothing but for the sensuousness which it professes to immolate :

I know the ways of pleasure, the sweet strains,
The lullings and the relishes of it ;
The propositions of hot blood and brains ;
What mirth and music mean ; what love and wit

Have done these twenty hundred years and more:
I know the projects of unbridled store:
My stuff is flesh, not brass; my senses live,
And grumble oft, that they have more in me
Than he that curbs them, being one to five:
Yet I love thee.

With his own consumptive body and his religious wife he was able to look abroad upon youth and the flesh with some degree of comfort in his contempt. Still he cannot but use the language of earthly for heavenly things, calling the words "My Master," for example, a "broth of smells that feeds and fats my mind." In one poem he consciously parodies a love-song of Donne's—"Soul's joy, now I am gone"—to make a song for his God. He uses, too, with much cunning, the profane poet's plea, that he would write better if he felt less deeply, for he says:

Verses, ye are too fine a thing, too wise
For my rough sorrows: cease, be dumb and mute,
Give up your feet and running to mine eyes,
And keep your measures for some lover's lute,
Whose grief allows him music and a rhyme:
For mine excludes both measure, tune and time.
Alas, my God!

It is hard not to believe that the sober grief, the sober joy, the mild retrospection, of the poems in "The Temple" were nursed by

the laborious ease of his life as saint and childless husband at Bemerton.

Milton, as every one knows, married three times. His wife was seventeen and he thirty-four when he married first. The marriage was made early in the Civil War, in 1643, and Mary Powell was of a Royalist family. It was and remains something of a mystery: "he took a journey into the country, nobody about him certainly knowing the reason, or that it was any more than a journey of recreation; but home he returns a married man that went out a bachelor" a month before. The bride found an excuse in a few weeks for leaving Milton and "a philosophical life" which was so unsuited to a country cavalier's daughter of an "unliveliness and natural sloth unfit for conversation." Home she went and left Milton to write "The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce," whether inspired by her possible refusal to consummate the marriage or not, cannot be known. She did not return, in spite of Milton's demands, for two years, and in the interval he was attempting an illegal if decorous union with the handsome and witty daughter of a Dr. Davis. Miss Davis did not care for the proposal. After his wife's desertion in 1643 he had also had the society of a woman at the house of Captain Hobson. His wife, Lady Margaret Ley, "daughter of

that good earl, once President of England's Council and her Treasury," the "honoured Margaret" of that sonnet, was "a woman of wit and ingenuity" whom he was glad to converse with in the evenings. His wife Mary was then, in 1645, unexpectedly introduced into Milton's company, and fell at his feet asking forgiveness. This he gave, and in the next year she bore him the first of four children, dying herself at the birth of the fourth in 1652, the year when Milton's blindness became complete. Mark Pattison saw in Mrs. Milton's pleading the model for the scene in "Paradise Lost," where

> Eve with tears that ceas'd not flowing
> And tresses all disordered, at his feet
> Fell humble, and embracing them, besought
> His peace.

At the end of 1646 he wrote a sonnet on "the religious memory of Mrs. Catherine Thomson, my Christian friend," which tells us all that is known of her, unless she belonged to the family with whom he afterwards lodged at Charing Cross.

Milton did not marry again until 1656, but before this he found intelligent and cultivated converse with the mother of one of his pupils, Lady Ranelagh, Robert Boyle's sister. Hers was "the one acquaintance which was worth

to him all the rest." In 1658 the second Mrs. Milton, Catharine Woodcock, died in childbed. She is only known to us through the sonnet beginning "Methought I saw my late espoused saint." But except for a few sonnets the period between his first marriage and the death of his second wife was not one of poetical creation, though this is to be attributed not to married life but to his self dedication to the cause of Liberty. 1658 was the year when "Paradise Lost" was effectively begun. It was finished before his third marriage.

At the death of his second wife Milton had three daughters under twelve years old, the eldest of them deformed. After this they had a governess, but they learnt little and were neglected, so that only the two younger could write, and that badly. They were taught, however, to read foreign languages, which they did not understand, and in revenge they sold some of their father's books behind his back.

There was no friendliness between father and children, and when one of them heard of his coming marriage she said "that was no news, but, if she could hear of their death, that *was* something." She was able to show that one tongue was enough for a woman, as Milton had said.

The wife Milton married in 1663, partly that he might have a housekeeper, was Elizabeth Minshull, aged twenty-four. She was an active and capable woman, devoted to his well-being, and providing him "such dishes as I think fit." She had also a good enough voice, though no ear, to give him some recreation by her singing. She it was who arranged for the daughters to leave the house and learn embroidery.

The view of women expressed in Milton's poems is due at least as much to his proud temper as to his own unfortunate first marriage. Adam is made for "God only," Eve "for God in him," and she addresses him as "O thou for whom and from whom . . . and without whom [I] am to no end," and admits: "God is thy law, thou mine." Adam is indeed "less fair" but then "beauty is excelled by manly grace." When she sees Adam and Raphael "entering on thoughts abstruse" she goes off to the flowers,

> Yet went she not as not with such discourse
> Delighted, or not capable her ear
> Of what was high. Such pleasure she reserved,
> Adam relating, she sole auditress.
> . . . He, she knew, would intermix
> Grateful digressions, and solve high dispute
> With conjugal caresses.

We may conclude from this, because it is

not alone, that the submissive beauty of a woman made a very strong appeal to Milton, her

> Too much of ornament, in outward show,
> Elaborate, of inward less exact.

Even the lofty "Wisdom in discourse with her loses discountenanc'd, and like folly shows," the highest praise to the instinctive wisdom of women, loses by being in part an amorous compliment, due to the "transport" of passion; and the angel bids him, "with contracted brow," not to be diffident of wisdom, to value himself, and so

> The more she will acknowledge thee her head
> And to realities yields all her shows.

In the same passage the Angel distinguishes the body from true love in a manner characteristic of both sensualist and ascetic, Milton being both:

> But, if his sense of touch, whereby mankind
> Is propagated, seem such dear delight
> Beyond all other, think the same voutsafed
> To cattle and each beast; which would not be
> To them made common and divulged, if aught
> Therein enjoyed were worthy to subdue
> The soul of Man, or passion in him move.
> What higher in her society thou find'st
> Attractive, human, rational, love still:
> In loving thou dost well; in passion not,
> Wherein true Love consists not.

Milton was not beyond his age in equalling the sense of touch with passion, and condemns his Puritanism out of his own mouth. Eve, it may be remembered, suggests that she and Adam should do their gardening apart, as "looks intervene and smiles or object new casual discourse draw on." Milton insists much upon the "naked beauty" of Eve, "undecked save with herself" and "no veil she needed, virtue proof," and "Eve ministered naked." He is also fond of pointing out that she felt no "dishonest shame," and that "no thought inferior altered her cheek," that "Love unlibidinous reigned," that she received Adam's courtship with "innocence and virgin modesty"—phrases which seem to show that the opposite was in his mind, and at least have the effect of suggesting the opposite to the reader; the poet himself is, as it were, a seventeenth-century intruder upon the scene, and really gives some indecency to the nakedness. This must remind us of "Comus," where the benighted Lady talks of her safeguards, conscience, etc., and the "unblemished form of Chastity." This is all the more remarkable because the part of the Lady was written for the Lady Alice Egerton, a child of thirteen. Mr. Greg condemns Milton for "passages of smug self-conceit upon a

subject whose delicacy he was apparently incapable of appreciating," and putting them into the mouth of a child, "thereby outraging at once the innocence of childhood and the reticence of youth," making her reply to the tempting Comus:

> Thou hast nor ear, nor soul, to apprehend
> The sublime notion and high mystery
> That must be uttered to unfold the sage
> And serious doctrine of Virginity.

Not less extraordinary is the elder brother's speech:

> But Beauty, like the fair Hesperian tree
> Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard
> Of dragon watch with unenchanted eye
> To save her blossoms, and defend her fruit
> From the rash hand of bold incontinence.
> You may as well spread out the unsunned heaps
> Of miser's treasure by an outlaw's den
> And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope
> Danger will wink on opportunity,
> And let a single helpless maiden pass
> Uninjured in this wild surrounding waste.

From which we are forced to conclude that either Milton or his age saw virginity as a valuable possession in itself which was constantly imperilled by fraud and force, and consciously preserved against them.

By his design or not, Milton's Eve shows a quicker and more human mind than his

Adam. Eve it is who sees that their circumscribed life is poor. "How are we happy still in fearing harm?" she asks; and "What is faith, love, virtue, unassayed?" Her reply to the serpent's flattery is, perhaps, too clever and tolerant:

> Serpent, thy overpraising leaves in doubt
> The virtue of that fruit, in thee first proved.

She perceives that "such prohibitions bind not" when they are aimed against wisdom. She jumps rapidly from

> Was I to have never parted from thy side?
> As good have grown there still, a lifeless rib—

to

> Being as I am, why didst not thou, the head,
> Command me absolutely not to go?

Her most powerful thought of all is not to be equalled or paralleled in the whole poem. She says to Adam:

> In thy power
> It lies, yet ere conception, to prevent
> The race unblest, to being yet unbegot.
> Childless thou art; childless remain. So death
> Shall be deceived his glut, and with us two
> Be forced to satisfy his ravenous maw.
> But if thou judge it hard and difficult,
> Conversing, looking, loving, to abstain
> From love's due rites, nuptial embraces sweet,
> And with desire to languish without hope,

Then, both our selves and seed at once to free
From what we fear for both, let us make short:
Let us seek Death, or, he not found, supply
With our own hands his office on ourselves.

The suggestion could not be addressed without irony to one so inflammable as Adam. His suggestion is different; for he asks why God did not make men "as angels, without feminine" or, as Sir Thomas Browne desired, find "some other way to generate mankind." When Michael tells them that they must leave Paradise, Adam says:

But prayer against his absolute decree
No more avails than breath against the wind.

Eve's contrasting attitude is characteristic. She is in hiding through Michael's speech, but breaks into audible lament and regret:

O flowers
That never will in other climate grow.

It is to be noted that Eve says nothing against the male sex, while Adam wretchedly foresees the calamity to men, human life, and household peace, through female snares "and straight conjunction with this sex." "Samson Agonistes" also takes this proverbial attitude, the chorus saying:

Wisest men
Have erred and by bad women been deceived.

Dalilah, like Eve, reproaches the man:

> Nor shouldst thou have trusted that to woman's frailty.

The chorus sings that woman's love is not won or kept by virtue, wisdom, valour, wit, strength, comeliness of shape, or amplest merit; she who seemed modest "under virgin veil" proves contrary in marriage; and therefore—

> God's universal law
> Gave to the man despotic power
> Over his female in due awe.

The influence of particular women is not easy to trace in Milton, except where he acknowledges it by such a sonnet as that to Lady Margaret Ley. But the influence of the physical beauty and spiritual tenderness of women, and of his first wife's unruliness, is conspicuous in nearly all his poetry. He sought female society for pleasure and serious converse all through middle age, though it is possible that "the lady of Christ's," as he was called at Christ's College, Cambridge, owed less to any women he may have met in his early manhood than to his own sensuous temperament casually stirred by the thought or the presence of the other sex. His youthful verses upon a woman seen by chance and only once in a spring walk have been

mentioned. When he was in Italy at the age of thirty he was moved by "one of the finest voices of the world," Leonora Baroni, to address her in Latin, paying her graceful compliments, saying, for example, that if God be in all things and diffused over all, in her alone does He speak; and that another Leonora drove Tasso mad for love, but this one could have restored him to himself by breathing peace into his breast with her soul-moving voice. He also wrote five Italian sonnets and a canzone to an Italian lady, probably not Leonora, though she charmed him by her voice, as well as her grace and her black-eyed and dark-haired beauty. But sooner or later there must have come a certain awkwardness in regarding the physical side of women, if we may draw any conclusion from the slightly grotesque and monstrous impression made by Eve and in a less degree by Adam in "Paradise Lost," as if they were half marble and half flesh, and in any case imperfectly visualised and resting too much upon the traditional or conventional view.

It is not surprising that Cowper felt profoundly the sight of his mother's picture over half a century after her death, since women from the beginning to the end meant so much to him. Most of his friends were women, and they were the most intimate and

most constant of his friends. His letter of 1790 to Mrs. Bodham reminds her of the cousinly affection between them when he used to stay at Catfield Rectory, and how he and Harriet made the parsonage ring with laughter; how her sister, Elizabeth Donne, was his playfellow at his own home, the Berkhampstead Rectory. His letter began: "My dearest Rose—whom I thought withered and fallen from the stalk, but whom I find still live," and went on, "I loved you dearly, when you were a child, and love not a jot the less for having ceased to be so." And there is little doubt that he had much of that kind of diffused sentiment, always ready to be reawakened, which is commoner among women than men. At Catfield also he sometimes saw his cousin, Theodora Cowper, to whom he made love when he was articled to an attorney at the age of eighteen. She and Harriet, afterwards Lady Hesketh, spent their days with him in giggling and making giggle. She was the "Delia" of his early love-poems, some of them written at Catfield in 1752 when he was twenty-one. Another is dated 1755. But her father would not allow the cousins to marry. At this time Cowper wrote a Latin thesis, never yet published, to prove marriage lawful between cousins, but in vain. It has been suggested that he

fell in love again in 1758, because he wrote a lively Latin epistle in that year about a pretty girl at Greenwich. Mr. J. C. Bailey thinks the language that of "the Latin exercise writer, not of the lover," which is not conclusive, while his other argument against the suggestion, that the girl "was only sixteen," is of no weight at all. Theodora Cowper remained unmarried, preserved the poems addressed to her, and was always the poet's friend. When he was in danger of losing the family allowance, on account of his extravagance, after his madness of 1763, an anonymous letter from one who "loved me tenderly and approved my conduct," told him that the full amount would be made up by the writer; and this must have been Theodora. Twenty years later he tells Lady Hesketh of an anonymous letter—not the first—making him a present of an annuity of £50 a year, and of a parcel containing a tortoiseshell snuff-box, "with a beautiful landscape on the lid of it, glazed with crystal." He made no guess at the sender, but was content to ask God to "bless him."

Theodora's sister, Harriet, who became Lady Hesketh, was a correspondent of Cowper until he came under the grim religious influence of Newton. In 1763 he had wondered how the deuce it had happened he was never

in love with her, much as he loved her. After his madness, in 1765, he remembered how he had not recognised her—"the only instance in which I knew not how to value your company was when I was not in my senses." Her reading of "John Gilpin" revived their friendship. In October 1785 she wrote to him, and he replied on the same day, renewing their relationship without an effort and with nothing but pleasure, reminding her of their country walks and their laughter at the "Arabian Nights" together. Next February he is expecting her June visit, and has been preparing everything, down to the furniture of her bed:

> It is, I assure you, superb, of printed cotton, and the subject classical. Every morning you will open your eyes on Phaeton kneeling to Apollo, and imploring his father to grant him the conduct of his chariot for a day. May your sleep be as sound as your bed will be sumptuous, and your nights at least will be well provided for.

Now again he writes to her as before about everything, people and places, body and mind and spirit, his stomach, his dumb-bells, the religious ass Teedon. The eighteen years' interval does not count now as an interval. He discusses Pope's "Homer" with her—she still likes some passages; and she it was who did most to advertise his own translation.

He thanks her for oysters. The mornings set apart for writing to her are holiday mornings: he "converses" with her. He thinks her letters the best in the world. She says he flatters her: but "No, my cousin, I did not flatter you, neither do I now, when I tell you that I never could find an opportunity." He promises not to be too agitated —not to die—in the excitement of her arrival. He has moved into his summer house with a window on to the orchard through which he will often see her pass, "and which therefore I already prefer to all the orchards in the world." He sends a man to meet her at Newport Pagnell. His name is Kitchener, "Kitch" for short, and he wears a blue coat:

> The first man, therefore, you shall see in a blue coat with white buttons, in the famous town of Newport, cry "Kitch!" He will immediately answer, "My Lady!" and from that moment you are sure not to be lost.

There was no disappointment. His dear cousin's arrival, he tells a friend, made them happier than they ever were at Olney. "She pleased everybody, and was pleased in her turn with everything she found; was always cheerful and sweet-tempered, and knew no pleasure equal to that of communicating pleasure to all around her."

"I am fond," he says, "of the sound of bells, but was never more pleased with those of Olney than when they rang her into her new habitation."

She interrupts the routine, but is so anxious for his success that she will not let him play truant from his proper business. Through her he made friends in the neighbourhood. His mind grew easy and happy, and he wrote "The Lily and the Rose"—of the lily and the rose contending in a lady's cheeks—explaining:

In general I believe, there is no man who has less to do with the ladies' cheeks than I have. I suppose it would be best to antedate it, and to imagine that it was written 20 yrs. ago, for my mind was never more in a trifling, butterfly trim than when I composed it, even in the earliest parts of my life.

She was the good angel who stooped to the swamp of Olney and lifted the household to the height of Weston Underwood. He wrote nearly always for his own pleasure, once or twice out of duty, but always to please her. He was indebted to her besides for many oysters and much brawn, and for two dozen of excellent Madeira. She asks for verses, but "Homer" takes all his time, except that a thought sometimes strikes him before he rises, and if it runs readily into verse and he can

finish it at once he does. "Am I not happier," he asks her, "than ever poet was, in having thee for my cousin?" He sends her his "Gratitude" for a tasselled cap, an artful "studying chair," carpets, movable shelves, and china:

> All these are not half that I owe
> To one, from our earliest youth
> To me ever ready to show
> Benignity, friendship and truth;
> For time, the destroyer declared
> And foe of our perishing kind,
> If even her face he has spared,
> Much less could he alter her mind.

As late as 1792 she could make him laugh heartily by her droll and humorous way of expressing her hate of the French at the Revolution. He wrote to her out of the abyss of his wretchedness in 1795, no longer able to call himself "affectionately yours" because all affection has forsaken him—he who is like the "solitary pillar of rock that the crumbling cliff has left at the high-water mark." Each letter is now his last. He will never see her again, nor Weston. His despair multiplies itself. Even in 1797 she is willing to come and take charge of him, though herself only convalescent at Cheltenham. In 1798 she describes delightful scenes, but, he says, "to one who if he

even saw them could receive no delight from them—who has a faint recollection that once he was susceptible of pleasure from such causes." He died in 1800, in nothing more miserable than in his loss of power to converse with his cheerful cousin. She survived him seven years.

Less of a friend and more of a lover, but still a very inspiriting friend for a whole year, was Lady Austen, widow of Sir Robert Austen. Cowper was pleased with the sight of her going into a shop as he looked out of his window at Olney. In July 1781 he had been called on and had returned the call, to find her "a lively agreeable woman; has seen much of the world, and accounts it a great simpleton, as it is. She laughs and makes laugh, and keeps up a conversation without seeming to labour it." She had "fallen in love with" Cowper and Mrs. Unwin; he was able to spend a whole day "without one cross occurrence or the least weariness to each other"; and he saw in her coming "strong marks of providential interposition." She broke down the wall that had shut out the world, and shut in Cowper and a few intimates, since his madness. In her company his mind recovered some spring. He wrote to her of the rapidly made friendship:

But who can tell how vast the plan
Which this day's incident began? . . .
A transient visit intervening
And made almost without a meaning,
(Hardly the effect of inclination,
Much less of pleasing expectation),
Produced a friendship then begun,
That has cemented us in one;
And placed it in our power to prove
By long fidelity and love,
That Solomon has wisely spoken;
"A threefold cord is not soon broken."

She settled in the Vicarage, and a private way connected the gardens of the two houses. She gave up the world and Cowper gave up his hermitage. In a wet August he longed for "Sister Anne":

With charitable mind to drag
My mind out of its proper quag.

They passed their days alternately at each other's house:

In the morning I walk with one or other of the ladies, and in the evening wind thread. Thus did Hercules, and thus probably did Samson, and thus do I; and were both those heroes living, I should not fear to challenge them for a trial of skill in that business, or doubt to beat them both.

After his morning visit to Lady Austen he walked; returned and dressed: then dined with her and "parted not till between ten and

eleven at night." There had early been a difference with her; it seemed to Cowper that her vivacity was exhausting, and that he had done ill to disturb his silent retirement; but three pairs of worked ruffles came from Lady Austen, and they were reconciled. She told him the story of John Gilpin and the poem on that subject is characteristic of the brightness which she encouraged. "On the Loss of the Royal George" was written by her desire, because she wanted words to a tune. He wrote the "Song on Peace" upon a sentiment given by her, and the song to the air of "The Lass of Pattie's Mill" at her request. Above all, she gave him the sofa for a subject, and so started him upon "The Task." Later, he complained that her exacting friendship left him no time to write, and "I was forced to neglect 'The Task' to attend upon the Muse who had inspired the subject." He could sometimes only find time for three lines at a sitting. She was also in some sort responsible, for Cowper's "Homer," because he was reading Pope's to her with much discontent, whereupon she advised him to write the translation which he desired. Mr. J. C. Bailey has also shown that she may have influenced his later satires. "Conversation" was begun at the time of their first meeting: "Retirement," the last of them, was "in a

very special sense, at that moment, Lady Austen's," says Mr. Bailey, because she had just then come into the country for retirement; its tone also is less morose, and the feeling for Nature less purely religious. It is not easy to say how Cowper would have defined his friendship for her at any particular moment. Possibly his friendship for Mrs. Unwin was so deep and secure that it gave him a freedom in forming other connections which not every one would understand. He was not tied to Mrs. Unwin either by marriage or by cohabitation, but he treated the bond between them as reverently as if he were; or rather took it as a matter of course; and he failed to see that not every one could be expected to know this. At any rate, Lady Austen wore a lock of his hair set with diamonds, and he wrote the following verses for her:

The star that beams on Anna's breast
  Conceals her William's hair;
'Twas lately severed from the rest
  To be promoted there.

The heart that beats beneath that breast
  Is William's well I know,
A nobler prize and richer far
  Than India could bestow.

She thus his favoured lock prefers
  To make her William shine;
The ornament indeed is hers,
  But all the honour mine.

This may have seemed a gay trifle of friendship to the playful versifier of fifty, but almost certainly not to Lady Austen. In 1784 Cowper found her in love with him, and he wrote a letter which she burnt in her anger at finding that he had been unmoved. Cowper told Lady Hesketh in 1786 that she left on account of her health a short time before he finished "The Task," but the reason appears to have been that friendly relations could not easily have been made to grow over Lady Austen's passionate declaration, whatever it was.

Cowper's longest and most intimate and continuous friendship was with Mary Unwin. Soon after leaving the madhouse in 1765 he went to live at the house of Mr. Unwin, a retired clergyman at Huntingdon. In October he had met Mrs. Unwin in the street and gone home with her and walked with her for near two hours talking in her garden. She suppressed the solitude and melancholy of his mind, and he felt that she was such an one as he had earnestly hoped he might meet when he got free. In 1767 Mr. Unwin fell from his horse and died, and Cowper and Mrs. Unwin settled together at Olney. She was seven years older than he, and Cowper compares their relation to that of mother and son. Nevertheless they thought of marriage,

"possibly," says Goldwin Smith, "as a propitiation to the evil tongues which did not spare this most innocent connexion"; but Cowper fell ill again, and they were never married. She became inevitable and essential to Cowper. They had a perfect understanding and were never separated. She did half his living for him. During his illness of 1773 he says:

> At the same time that I was convinced of Mrs. Unwin's aversion to me, I could endure no other companion. The whole management of me consequently devolved upon her, and a terrible task she had; she performed it, however, with a cheerfulness hardly ever equalled on such an occasion; and I have often heard her say that if ever she praised God in her life it was when she found that she was to have all the labour. She performed it accordingly, but, as I hinted once before, very much to the hurt of her own constitution.

She made his caudle and his tincture, being "more exact than the apothecaries." When he recovered and began writing verses as an amusement, she suggested that he should write a moral satire on "The Progress of Error," which accordingly he did. She and he submitted together to the religious influence of Newton; without her he must have suffered more from it than he did. She, he once said, speaking of his translation of the "Iliad," "has been my touchstone always,

and without reference to her taste and judgment I have printed nothing." The last lines of "The Task" attribute to "the fair" Lady Austen the inspiration, but apparently the serious and wide roving digressions to Mrs. Unwin, "whom flowers alone I knew would little please." Lady Hesketh described her:

> She is very far from grave; on the contrary she is cheerful and gay, and laughs *de bon cœur* upon the smallest provocation. Amidst all the puritanical words which fall from her *de temps en temps*, she seems to have by nature a quiet fund of gaiety; great indeed must it have been, not to have been wholly overcome by the close confinement in which she has lived, and the anxiety she must have undergone for one whom she certainly loves as well as one human being can love another. I will not say she idolises him, because that she would think wrong; but she certainly seems to possess the truest regard and affection for this excellent creature, and, as I said before, has in the most literal sense of those words, no will or shadow of inclination but what is his.

He calls her in "The Task" his

> Dear companion of my walks
> Whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive
> Fast lock'd in mine, with pleasure such as love,
> Confirm'd by long experience of thy worth
> And well-tried virtues, could alone inspire.

When she was ill and Cowper more ill, in the years when decay began to end their happiness, it was proposed that it would do him

good if she should go out with him: she said to him that she would like a walk; he rose at once and offered her his arm, which she took and so they went out. In 1792, at her second paralytic seizure, Cowper came in to Hayley "with a countenance of absolute distraction, saying 'There is a wall of separation between me and my God.'" * He never complained of the burden which she became to him in her last miserable years. When she died Cowper could only cry out once and never spoke of her again.

The two poems obviously and by their subject connected with Mary Unwin are well known: the sonnet, "To Mrs. Unwin" and the four stanzas "To Mary." His cry, "Mary! I want a lyre with other strings," does but anticipate Browning's sense of lack in "One word more." To express a relationship of this kind, of such age and domestic intimacy, is impossible in any words. "Deeds not words" is the necessary motto of every one, whether a man of words or not, in the like case, and the sonnet is only another and original variation upon the poet's familiar contempt for words, which Sidney expressed in his "Muses, I oft invoked your holy aid," with its:

* Edward Dowden's "Essays Modern and Elizabethan."

But now I mean no more your help to try
Nor other sugring of my speech to prove,
But on her name incessantly to cry.

The knowledge of what Mary was must have made any verses seem "too fine," too suspicious in their touch of courtliness and ceremony. Nevertheless, the stanzas "To Mary" succeed in making all other love-poems seem airy, fantastical, and written not so much for love of woman, but for love of love. Not only Sidney but even Wordsworth is—for the moment only, be it said—slight and painted beside this poem, so earthly and homely in all detail, yet in sense divine. Yet it is a triumph of art in that it does not depend for its singular effect upon any false touch of mere nature; it is a poem perfectly complete in itself, and not only when fitted into its context of Cowper's life.

Mr. J. C. Bailey is probably the first to suggest that the tenth stanza—

And then I feel that still I hold
A richer store ten thousand fold
Than misers fancy in their gold,
My Mary!

—always omitted since, was deleted by Hayley, lest Theodora Cowper should see "this passionately outspoken stanza." But it is surely not reasonable to suppose that a loving woman could read all the other verses through

without regretful or jealous perturbation, and give way at this.

Cowper's women, as may be seen, were all but everything to him. They made life and his work possible to him. He became very much like one of them with his rebuke to tobacco:

> Pernicious weed whose scent the fair annoys,
> Unfriendly to society's chief joys,
> Thy worst effect is banishing for hours
> The sex whose presence civilises ours—

and his tenderness even to the worm:

> I would not enter on my list of friends
> (Though graced with polished manners and fine sense,
> Yet wanting sensibility) the man
> Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.

In his poem on "Friendship" he does not mention female friends and even calls the love of woman "not so pure" or so secure as friendship. But this comparison is not without a suspicion of conventionality, perhaps of the Puritan's low opinion of women. The "Valediction" is probably truer to his deepest thoughts in its desire for a retreat from the world with one who has known and escaped mankind—

> With him, perhaps with *her* (for men have known
> No firmer friendships than the fair have shown),
> Let me enjoy, in some unthought-of spot,

All former friends forgiven and forgot,
Down to the close of life's fast fading scene,
Union of hearts, without a flaw between.

And such was his fortune. He does not, indeed, dwell upon the physical beauty of women either in his verse or prose; and perhaps the one romantic touch to a woman's portrait in his work is the comparison of the rustic lass to "the fair shepherdess of old romance." But he did not confine himself only to homely intimacies. Many of his lively occasional poems were inspired by women "whom man was born to please." We have to thank Mrs. Newton for—

A noble theme demands a noble verse;
In such I thank you for your fine oysters . . .

and Mrs. King (the friend of his brothers, who was made one of his by "The Task") for the poem in return for a quilt:

The Bard if e'er he feel at all,
Must sure be quickened by a call
  Both on his heart and head,
To pay with tuneful thanks the care
And kindness of a lady fair
  Who deigns to deck his bed . . .

and Miss Stapleton, afterwards Mrs. Courtenay, for two sprightly pieces addressed to that young lady who sang and played "like an angel."

Mrs. Blake played perfectly the typical minor but essential part in her life-long companionship with the poet. Catherine Boucher of Battersea, was a "bright-eyed, dark-haired brunette, with expressive features and a slim, graceful form." When she married Blake in 1782, she was twenty, illiterate and unable to write her name; he was twenty-four. Blake had been walking out with a girl who had admirers and replied to his complaint with only "Are you a fool?" and a scornful glance. This cured him of jealousy, but he was bemoaning his fate at a friend's house when a girl who was listening said she pitied him from her heart. "*Do* you pity me?" asked he. And her "*Yes!* I do, most sincerely," brought out at once his enthusiastic "Then I love you for that." The marriage displeased Blake's father, and the two began housekeeping in lodgings in Green Street, Leicester Square. She had a "loving loyal nature, an adaptive open mind," and was so sympathetic that she imbibed enough of his very spirit to reflect it in design which might almost have been his own. When he discovered his own way of engraving in relief both words and designs, he taught her to take off the impressions and to help in tinting them; she also bound them in boards. He told her all his history, and she knew him

perfectly; she "learned to have visions" like him, and would kneel down with him to pray for a return of the visions when his invention flagged. She was a good cook and made the money go far. If she told him the money was running short, and he said "Damn the money, it's always the money," she corrected him by putting empty plates on the table. For years he himself lit the morning fire and put on the kettle before she awoke, but she soon wore out her good looks though not her sense and affection, nor her bright eyes and "good expression," with hard work. Blake was "at once lover, husband and child" to his wife, who had no other child. And she was an adoring mother. Mr. de Selincourt thinks that her submissiveness foretold "the less desirable elements in her husband's mystical scheme." He is said to have "learned from the Bible that wives should be in common," and he treated her as a good master used to treat a good old-fashioned family servant of the indispensable kind. But why the slatternly serviceable wife should have encouraged him in the view—expressed, *e.g.* in Leutha's words: "Like sweet perfumes I stupefied the masculine perceptions and kept only the feminine awake"—it is not easy to see. Mr. de Selincourt himself points out, too, that Job's wife is treated throughout

the illustrations to the book of "Job" with "an unfaltering sympathy and devotion" in return for "her dumb identification of herself with her husband in his sufferings." And it is important to notice, with Mr. Sampson, that in his system the Emanation, representing "imagination and self-annihilation," is a female, while the spectre, representing "reason, selfhood, pride and self-righteousness," is a male, and that Mary, in "Sweet Mary, the first time she ever was there," according to Rossetti, stands for "the poetic or spiritual mind moving unrecognised and reviled among its fellows." In his last days, in 1827, he suddenly turned to his wife, saying: "Stay! keep as you are! *You* have been ever an angel to me: I will draw you!" He thereupon did "a phrenzied sketch of some power; highly interesting, but," says the unpenetrating narrator, "not like." At his death he sang songs to his Maker in her presence, telling her, "My beloved! they are *not mine*," and promising that he would always be near to take care of her. She always spoke of him afterwards as "that wonderful man," whose spirit was still with her.

In spite of his belief that wives should be in common, and his alleged threat to introduce another wife into his household, Blake saw

little of any other woman after his marriage. His sister lived with them at Felpham, but it is said that wife and sister did not agree. Mrs. Blake was jealous and even suspicious. For a short time, in 1783, Blake was welcomed by the Bluestockings at Mrs. Matthews' in Rathbone Place. Her admiration was at least the immediate cause of the publication of his "Poetical Sketches" in 1783. But his "unbending deportment" made him uncongenial, and in return it is surmised that "An Island in the Moon" was a loose satire upon that company. This never yet printed satire was not fitted for their eyes with its address to women:

> Hail finger-footed lovely Creatures!
> The females of our human natures,
> Formed to suckle all Mankind,
> 'Tis you that come in time of need,
> Without you we should never breed,
> Or any Comfort find—

and to Matrimony:

> Then come, ye maidens! come ye swains!
> Come and be curèd of your pains
> In Matrimony's Golden cage.

Most of Blake's writing about women could probably be traced to the free working of his own mind rather than to experience and observation. In a poem written, it is said,

before he was fourteen, he sang of love, of his childish freedom, and then his entanglement in Love—

> He caught me in his silken net
> And shut me in his golden cage;

and his early "My silks and fine array" is upon the same theme:

> My silks and fine array,
> My smiles and languish'd air,
> By Love are driv'n away.

Whether these are to be put down to physical as well as mental precocity I cannot say, though it is possible, since the physical and the spiritual sides of sex are prominent in the serious and ribald work of his later years. But these earlier poems look sometimes like conventional sentiments written down with a magical crudity by a child who does not wholly understand what he writes. All are of love, but the "black-eyed maid" is the only clue, and that may be conventional. They speak, perhaps, of the state of love rather than of particular attachment. He creates a sort of Elizabethan rustic-pastoral Eden made out of a cento of poetic words and sentiments mingled with some plain facts as in "Blind Man's Buff"; the "Pilgrim with his crook and hat" is characteristic of this England so

unlike that of George III. It is also clear that he was familiar with folk-songs like "Kitty alone," and "As I walk'd forth one Maymorning." His reading and his own heart conspired to make this fresh but painted world. One of the facts of life which haunted him was "the youthful harlot's curse":

> The Harlot's cry from street to street
> Shall weave old England's winding sheet.

This, he says, "blasts the new born infant's tear and blights with plagues the marriage hearse." Jesus, he says in "The Everlasting Gospel," should have been born not of a virgin "with narrow soul and looks demure," but of a Harlot, "such a one as Magdalen." And another fact, of opposite and always joyous effect, is the honest and open spending of youth's physical vigour in love, with this particular and repeated qualification:

> Let age and sickness silent rob
> The vineyards in the night;
> But those who burn with vig'rous youth
> Pluck fruits before the light.

One of the most characteristic and far reaching of his opinions finds corroboration in this peculiarity:

> Abstinence sows sand all over
> The ruddy limbs and flaming hair,
> But desire gratified
> Plants fruits of life and beauty there.

Probably he would have desired some state where, according to James Hinton's ideal, a man might "be such a one that you will be able to obey your impulses." But with all his curiosity and sympathy he remained thoroughly and exclusively masculine, expressing himself naturally through masculine symbols, and using the feminine even at its loftiest as an attendant and shadowy spirit.

Wordsworth and Shelley owed almost as much as Cowper to the long and intimate friendship of women. Shelley was an only son among sisters, and continued to surround himself with women. Wordsworth had from his early manhood onward the company of two women, his sister Dorothy and his wife, who were almost as directly indispensable to his mind as they were indirectly through his domestic ease. Dorothy, born in 1771 and never married, was only a year younger than Wordsworth. From 1795 she had no other duty or pleasure but to be with him, and apart from him neither was possible to the devoted woman. Having left Cambridge and returned from his travels through revolutionary France, he was now free from all cares except of composition and "blest," as he tells Coleridge in "The Prelude" (a poem planned and begun in his sister's society at Goslar in 1799), with Dorothy's presence, "a joy above all joys,

that seemed another morn risen on midnoon." In his disappointment at the bloody issue of the Revolution, "then it was—

> That the beloved sister in whose sight
> Those days were passed, now speaking in a voice
> Of sudden admonition—like a brook
> That did but *cross* a lonely road, and now
> Is seen, heard, felt and caught at every turn,
> Companion never lost through many a league—
> Maintained for me a saving intercourse
> With my true self; for, though bedimmed and changed
> Much, as it seemed, I was no further changed
> Than as a clouded and a waning moon;
> She whispered still that brightness would return,
> She, in the midst of all preserved me still
> A Poet, made me seek beneath that name,
> And that alone, my office upon earth, . . .

She, he says, softened his "oversternness" and planted the crevices of his nature with flowers, and she helped to form his masculine ideal:

> His heart
> Be tender as a nursing mother's heart;
> Of female softness shall his life be full
> Of humble cares and delicate desires,
> Mild interests and gentlest sympathies.

Wordsworth responded to her affection with a wish that each of her pleasant and painful emotions "should excite a similar pleasure or a similar pain" in himself. She said that he had no pleasure apart from her, and she discovered in him a "violence of affection," a

"tenderness that never sleeps," and "a delicacy of manner such as I have observed in few men."

Coleridge said of her that she was "a woman indeed—in mind, I mean, and heart"; of various information, watchful in observation, and her taste "a perfect electrometer"; and as early as 1792 she had shown herself a candid and original critic of her brother's poetry. His "Evening Walk" of that year was addressed to her.

The brother and sister lived together first at Racedown in 1795. They moved together to Alfoxden. They toured together to Tintern and Chepstow in 1798, when Wordsworth composed the "Lines written above Tintern Abbey," and then in Germany. Their lives in the Lake Country were never separate and seldom divided until her last years of decay in mind and body; when he was away a little while she lingered out of doors late in the moonlight in the hope of hearing his tread. She wrote little herself except her journals, but her "irregular verses" on the difference between "loving" and "liking" are deeply characteristic as well as just in sentiment and witty in expression:

> Say not you *love* a roasted fowl
> But you may love a screaming owl . . .
> And you may love the strawberry flower,
> And love the strawberry in its bower;

But when the fruit, so often praised
For beauty, to your lip is raised,
Say not you *love* the delicate treat,
But *like* it, enjoy it, and thankfully eat.

Wordsworth refers to her again and again, as, for example, in—

She who dwells with me, whom I have loved
With such communion that no place on earth
Can ever be a solitude for me.

They shared their books; she read "Paradise Lost" aloud to him and both were "much impressed, and also melted into tears." They sat together talking till dawn. She was always ready to put on her "woodland dress" to go with him. When they were not out together he could always share her observation and experience through her journal. The poem beginning "She had a tall man's height or more" is apparently founded upon an entry in Dorothy's journal beginning "A very tall woman, tall much beyond the measure of tall women, called at the door," and dated nearly a year earlier than the poem. Her words by themselves, though brief and unarranged notes, are here, as in so many other places, quietly graphic and effective, and it is quite possible to prefer them to the poem. Even her notes of the scene which inspired Wordsworth's "I wandered lonely as a cloud" may still be read for the delicacy and

simplicity and a touch of rough earthliness, not inharmonious but not in the poem.

She had a particular curious liking for the beggars, men out of work, gipsies, and home-going sailors who passed her in the wild roads or knocked at her door for help, and she regarded them with perhaps more charity than the poet by himself could have commanded. She has a most charming page on the wild "road lass" accompanying a passing carter—"her business seemed to be all pleasure—pleasure in her own motions." She wrote out some of his poems for him. She made his fires, laid his untidy clothes by, filed his newspapers, and then—"got my dinner, two boiled eggs and two apple tarts." They read over his poems together, or he repeated them after composition, and sometimes, no doubt, as in "The Robin and the Butterfly" she says they did, "*We* left out some lines." She was not, however, over critical and was "enchanted" with "The Idiot Boy." The observations in her journals were often beautiful and often very close, and they reappear in his poems. Professor Knight, *e.g.*, compares her entry:

> Then we sate by the fire, and were happy, only our tender thoughts became painful—

with Wordsworth's lines:

> In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
> Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

Their minds probably worked much together and from a mutual stimulus, and even if a thought had originally been his the record of it in her journal was valuable. It is impossible to assign priority to any of their common ideas and phrases. For example, on October 11, 1802, Dorothy says: "We walked to the Easedale hills to hunt waterfalls." Wordsworth's poem "Louisa," where the phrase, "To hunt the waterfalls" occurs, is attributed to either 1803 or 1805.

Mary Hutchinson, whom Wordsworth married in 1802, was as loving and sympathetic as Dorothy, though perhaps less articulate, a woman of character but not enough to disturb the poet. She and Dorothy mingle in the mind into one woman, a flawless example of the submissive type. The two combined to make him and one another always at ease and often happy. He says of her:

> Wise as women are
> When genial circumstance hath favoured them,
> She welcomed what was given, and craved no
> more . . .
> Whate'er the scene presented to her view
> That was the best, to that she was attuned
> By her benign simplicity of life. . . .
> God delights
> In such a being; for her common thoughts
> Are piety, her life is gratitude.

With her he enjoys the bliss,

> The bliss of walking daily in life's prime
> Through field or forest with the maid we love,
> While yet our hearts are young, while yet we breathe
> Nothing but happiness, in some lone nook,
> Deep vale, or anywhere, the home of both
> From which it would be misery to stir.

She was the Maid of the "Farewell," the gentle Maid "whose pleasures are in wild fields gathered." She was true to Wordsworth's idea of wisdom, "true to the kindred points of Heaven and Home." She was the maid of "She was a phantom of delight," though the germ of that poem was "four lines composed as a part of the verses on the 'Highland Girl.'" In a sonnet he speaks of her "goodness, never melancholy" and her "large heart and humble mind, that cast into one vision, future, present, past." In the dedication to "The White Doe of Rylstone" he reminds her of their happy tears together in reading "The Faerie Queene"—

> When years of wedded life were as a day
> Whose current answers to the heart's desire.

She bore him children, and they were constant inmates of one house. Her forbearance and Dorothy's were apparently as

easy to their love as they were necessary. She and Dorothy alike seem born to respond to the poet's love and admiration of one in whom Nature

> Hath tempered so her clay
> That every hour thy heart runs wild
> Yet never once doth go astray.

She was the author herself of the two lines:

> They flash upon the inward eye
> Which is the bliss of solitude.

But it was her calm fresh presence, "a spirit to penetrate the lofty and the low," that had most influence upon the poet, not her observation or her merely intellectual powers. Twenty years after their marriage, in his "O dearer far than light and life are dear," he addresses her as one for whom all the future "with 'sober certainties' of love is blest":

> Peace settles where the intellect is meek,
> And Love is dutiful in thought and deed.

In her, in her peaceful sister Sarah Hutchinson, and in Dorothy, he was blessed in finding the very type most admired by him and most suitable to his temper and way of life, the meek domestic woman, the unobtrusive necessity, who yet had quick intelligence and lasting freshness of spirit.

Wordsworth has left us little except "Strange fits of passion have I known" to throw much light on a dark saying of his:

> Had I been a writer of love-poetry it would have been natural to me to write with a degree of warmth which would hardly have been approved by my principles, and which might have been undesirable for the reader.

Perhaps he was thinking of nothing more than what in that poem he tells in "the Lover's ear alone." Or it may have been but the naïve expression of his astonishment at feelings which he may have been too ready to believe peculiar or exceptionally strong in himself. But his nature was strong in ways not compatible with the usual view of Wordsworth, as may be gathered from stories of his neglect of the conventions, his masterful indolence, the sternness which it needed his sister to soften, and the "stiff moody temper" which made him, when a little boy, strike a whip through a family portrait out of pure devilry. Describing his school days, "the vernal heat of poesy" sends him to solitude "like a sick lover," but he does not confess to having been a lover. Later, he describes a night of dancing:

> Spirits upon the stretch, and here and there
> Slight shocks of young love-liking interspersed,
> Whose transient pleasure mounted to the head,
> And tingled through the veins.

But he goes out at dawn, and looking upon the pomp of morning with full heart, becomes a "dedicated spirit," giving up foolish worldliness. The "love-liking" was perhaps not much, even if we allow for the slighting retrospect of maturity. In any case, in recording his later visit to a theatre, he tells us that "something of a girlish child-like gloss survived for scenes like these." The lover's enthusiasm in "Vaudracour and Julia"—

> Earth breathed in one great presence of the spring;
> Life turned the meanest of her implements,
> Before his eyes, to price above all gold . . .

is the nearest in the early poems to a proof of passionate love. Neither in verse nor prose has he said anything more to betray himself. Some of his poems concerning women describe their beauty or his admiration, but those which are most passionate relate to emotion remembered in tranquillity; and the cause seems forgotten in the emotion, as in "She dwelt among the untrodden ways" or "A slumber did my spirit seal." Nothing appears to be known of the poems written in 1799, several of them mentioning "Lucy," and all forming a natural group. It is assumed that they are fictitious. There are no poems of rapture addressed to a woman. He writes of beautiful and young women in

a manner so detached for the most part that we never give its face value to the phrase :

> Oh ! might I kiss the mountain rains
> That sparkle on her cheek.

This makes it impossible that "Louisa" should have meant simply Dorothy. He was thirty-three years old and had been three years married when this was written, and the poem is called explicitly "Louisa, after accompanying her on a mountain excursion." There is hardly an alternative but to accept the attitude as avuncular. He liked to dwell upon this wild innocent type, suggested perhaps by the girlhood of his sister, and in "To a Young Lady who had been reproached for taking long walks in the country" he defends Louisa, foreseeing her as wife and friend, "healthy as a shepherd boy"—

> Thy thoughts and feelings shall not die,
> Nor leave thee, when grey hairs are nigh,
> A melancholy slave ;
> But an old age serene and bright,
> And lovely as a Lapland night,
> Shall lead thee to thy grave.

For his Muse he himself suggests the guise of Milkmaid or Mermaid. Having spoken of Lady Beaumont's large dark eyes, he must add :

> Dark, but to every gentle feeling true
> As if their lustre flowed from ether's purest blue.

Woman, for him, must be gentle and innocent, and either young and birdlike or sober and domesticated, however strong and wild, and he has only an external admiration for the queenly dark beggar woman. Marriage could not affect a lover of this kind. He continued to write of women always as if much younger, smaller and less human creatures than himself.

Shelley was brought up with five sisters younger than himself and only one brother, the youngest of the family. He was friendly with his sisters: with Elizabeth he collaborated at an early age in writing a play, and possibly in the "Poems by Victor and Cazire," and she wrote verses very much like his own and consoled him in his despair; he encouraged Hellen at verse-making. Until the final breach with his family he made many attempts to "awaken their intellects," visited them at school and gave them cakes and advice, but, failing to satisfy himself, he wished to have two children, if possible girls of four or five, whom he might bring up in a sequestered spot and so study the impression of the world upon minds secure from human prejudice. The sisters in return were devoted to Shelley, and after he was sent down from Oxford they saved their pocket-money to supply him. When he was

sixteen he tried to open a correspondence with the youthful author Felicia Brown (afterwards Hemans), but had no encouragement from her. When about seventeen he was close friends with his beautiful cousin, Harriet Grove, who had dallied with scepticism. Some chapters of "Zastrozzi" are said to be by her. He tried to improve her unorthodoxy, but only brought the relationship to an end by shocking her and her family. She married soon afterwards, and he exclaimed in the manner of Locksley Hall: "She is gone! she is lost to me for ever! She married! Married to a clod of earth, she will become as insensible herself; all those fine capabilities will moulder." The disappointment inspired him with indignation against intolerance: "I swear," he said, "that never will I forgive intolerance! It is the only point on which I allow myself to encourage revenge." His first wife, Harriet Westbrook, he found at school with his sisters. He began by corresponding with her for the improvement of her and of her companions, his sisters; not only with Harriet who was a graceful, joyous-hearted girl with light brown hair and a pleasant voice, but with her elder sister who had no charms and called for that tolerance which he expressed when he said that "if compelled to

associate even with Caliban he would find something to admire." Another of his correspondents was Elizabeth Hitchener, a Sussex schoolmistress aged twenty-eight when he was nineteen, in 1811. Shelley lent her the books of poets and philosophers after one meeting, and invited her to a correspondence in which they were to assail one another's orthodoxy and unorthodoxy. She gave him an opportunity to pour out in many letters of strident eloquence all that he felt about Nature and man and society, and about the everlastingness of their noble and intimate friendship. But the correspondence was hardly begun in Wales when he hastened to London to rescue Harriet Westbrook from misery and persecution. She did him the honour of loving him, and he consented to marry her to make her happy. He did not cease to be her instructor, while she in return read aloud in a beautiful voice which nevertheless sent him to sleep. He continued to write to Miss Hitchener and, having to paint the golden age in a poem and draw a picture of Heaven, told her that he could do neither without her. He invited her to Wales to share a castle, which even he calls "somewhat aerial," with his mother, his uncle Pilfold, and some of Miss Hitchener's pupils. He longed for her in Wales or

Ireland, saying: "Oh that you were with us. You have said you are not handsome, but, though the sleekness of your skin, the symmetry of your form, might not attract the courtiers of Dublin Castle, yet that tongue of energy, and that eye of fire, would awe them into native insignificance and command the conviction of those whose hearts vibrate in unison with justice and benevolence." Some passages of his letters run to blank verse in their excitement, and Professor Dowden has pointed out that some of it appeared with variations in "Queen Mab." On her side she was well satisfied to be "talking to Percy about virtue." All that he required of her was an intercourse that would suffer gladly his incontinence of words and ideas. When at last she joined the Shelleys, they spent many hours reading and talking together; together they launched bottles containing his "Declaration of Rights" into the sea; and under the same impulse as unlocked his brain and heart with her he was now writing "Queen Mab" —the dedication was to Harriet, as his "purer mind" and "inspiration." To this same period Professor Dowden attributes the solemnly rapturous blank verse to Harriet, prophesying deathless love between them:

O thou
Whose dear love gleamed upon the gloomy path
Which this lone spirit travelled, drear and cold,
Yet swiftly leading to those awful limits
Which mark the bounds of time and of the space
When Time shall be no more; wilt thou not turn
Those spirit-beaming eyes and look on me,
Until I be assured that Earth is Heaven
And Heaven is Earth?

Harriet possessed what he could spare of his heart from his ideas. Miss Hitchener was loved only as representing those ideas, though he might well have believed his love something more had she invited him. She was one of those "many mortal forms" in which he "rashly sought" the shadow of that Being of "exceeding glory" whom he had met in dreams and solitude and poetry and philosophy. Harriet and her sister Eliza Westbrook probably helped Shelley to get tired of Miss Hitchener, and in a phrase which might have come from them he described her at the end of 1812 as "our late tormentor and schoolmistress." He was astonished at his "fatuity and inconsistency and bad taste" in having her at his house for four months. Yet she had done her useful part in preserving to Shelley his belief in a "happy state of equal law" attainable by "habits of the strictest virtue." He was now seeing much of the family of Godwin, and of the vegetarian

Newtons, whose children he loved. But Harriet did not cease to interest him. He helped her at Latin. She was a bad housekeeper but she sang "Robin Adair" for him and read aloud Berkeley, Sir William Drummond, Southey's "Cid" and Scott's "Rokeby." In the middle of 1813 their first child Ianthe was born, and Shelley wrote a sonnet upon it like Coleridge's upon his first-born :

> I love thee Baby! for thine own sweet sake ;
> Dearest when most thy tender traits express
> The image of thy mother's loveliness.

He went to Bracknell to be near the Boinvilles—Mrs. Boinville, a sister of Mrs. Newton, a beautiful lady whose "face was as a damsel's face and yet her hair was grey," and her daughter Cornelia Turner who encouraged Shelley in Italian studies. In this circle all were naturally of Shelley's opinion, instead of by imitation like Harriet. Harriet had not suckled her child, but she now read less and grew tired of unusual opinions and behaviour. Her sister Eliza was now a cause of actual "disgust and horror" in Shelley. He was not happy away from the refined and sympathetic Boinvilles, and early in 1814 it is evident that his feelings were disturbed, though he may not have been out of love with Harriet, whom he remarried

in March. "Thy dewy looks," "Away! the moor is dark" and "Thy look of love has power to calm" were written at this time. The first may refer to Cornelia Turner or any other woman; it is a poem of little value except as autobiography, and for that it is not explicit. "Away! the moor" is made imperfect by the same need and lack of explanation: it makes its own spiritual and physical world, but "the music of two voices and the light of one sweet smile" present apparently insuperable difficulties. "Thy look of love" is an appeal to Harriet written during a revival of his affection for her. This belongs to May, the month perhaps of Shelley's first meeting with Mary Godwin, a girl with golden hair and hazel eyes, aged sixteen; "Mine eyes were dim," was addressed to her in June 1814, a poem left incomplete and too much perplexed with immediate and private feeling to be either quite intelligible or quite poetry. So also with "Yet look on me," in which he addresses Mary Godwin—it has been suggested that it was Harriet!—as one whose voice "is as the tone of my heart's echo." Shelley was convinced that Harriet was unfaithful to him. In July he saw her in London and arranged a separation. He was not at ease over the change. His eyes were bloodshot; he had

laudanum constantly by him; he repeated: "Man's happiest lot is not to be." Harriet, he explained, was a "noble animal": but unable to "feel poetry" and "understand philosophy," she was an unfit wife. But he invited her to join him and Mary when they left England together. He saw the proposed arrangement in "some sweet retreat among the mountains" only as it concerned himself; desiring it himself, it immediately seemed possible, and other people adapted themselves, in his mind, like dummies or statues to the situation. He and Mary were reading "As you like it," and they shared a love of the sublime and beautiful unpopulated scenery on their journey from Paris to Switzerland. On the stay at Brunnen Shelley began the "Assassins" and dictated some pages to Mary. With them was Clara Mary Jane Clairmont, daughter of Godwin's second wife by her first husband, a lively and clever dark girl, almost a year younger than Mary, but able to join the lovers in their pleasures among books and Nature. When Mary was pregnant in 1815 and went early to bed, Miss Clairmont—as Claire Clairmont she is always known—sat up with Shelley talking, and when a pillow moved one night in Claire's room by no visible agency both were equally nervous and excited in discussing "these

mysteries." Shelley appears to have suspected that she was too fond of him, blamed her incapacity for friendship, and bade himself be content with one great affection and never let more than one into "the hallowed circle."

For Mary he had a great admiration, for her "exquisitely fashioned intelligence" and superior "originality and simplicity of mind." Her thoughts alone, he said, could awaken his, and without hers his mind was dead and cold; so much so that he believed he would be as submissive to her as Harriet was to himself. They read abundantly together, the poetry of Spenser, Wordsworth, Southey, and Kirke White; the novels of Voltaire, Godwin, and Monk Lewis; books of travel and so on. Shelley and Claire walked and talked and read Italian together. Mary was jealous and openly suspicious: "Pray, is Clara with you," she asked, when Shelley was away house-hunting. In the spring of 1816 the three left England together for Paris and Geneva, but by this time Claire was pregnant by Lord Byron, whom she had met when she was trying to get on to the stage. Byron was in Switzerland before them and the four became companions, though Mary did not join the nightly talks of Byron and Shelley owing to her "timidity and incapacity," she said.

Their child was probably not always a pleasure to Shelley, and Mary wrote to him anticipating that he would like him more when he had a nursery to himself and was only admitted "dressed and in good humour." She playfully asked him if he would be happy with "another little squaller"; at which he would look grave—"but I do not mean anything." Mary was growing into a more and more moderate young woman, afraid, for example, that Cobbett was capable of becoming a Marat. She was already careful and social in her views of practical things. It was characteristic of her to write, giving all her excellent reasons for and against going abroad in the winter of 1817–18, but leaving to him "the manly part, to decide." To Italy they went, still with Claire and now her baby also, Allegra. Mary copied "Rosalind and Helen." Shelley read "Hamlet" aloud; he and Mary read together Ariosto, Spenser, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Shakespeare. Shelley could do no original work in the summer of 1818, and he translated Plato's Symposium; but Mary having said that Plato's conception of love and friendship shocked the manners of their time, he undertook also to write "A discourse on the Manners of the Ancients relative to the subject of Love," which was only begun. An instance of Mrs. Shelley's matured con-

ventional judgment is very noticeable in 1819. Their Swiss maid was "betrayed" by a man whom they believed to be of very bad character, yet Mrs. Shelley forced him to marry the girl, saying, "I would not throw the girl on the world without in some degree binding her to this man," thereby giving him grounds for lifelong resentment, and her for helpless misery. Mary continued to improve herself: she had drawing lessons at Rome in 1819, while Claire had singing lessons. Shelley's habit in 1819 was to read in bed until half-past seven, then to rise and breakfast, and to read or write until dinner at two; after dinner, to read Dante with Mary, gossip, eat grapes and figs, and sometimes walk; at half-past five to read Spanish with Mrs. Gisborne until near seven; then to call for Mary and stroll till supper time. Mrs. Gisborne was another of the middle-aged women who were kind to Shelley. She had had great loveliness, was an old friend of Godwin's, amiable and accomplished. She led him to study Calderon, and he addressed to her one of the most charming of letters in verse. Another such friend was Lady Mountcashell. She was afterwards the author of "Advice to Young Mothers on the Physical Education of Children; by a Grandmother," a book strongly individual in ideas, and even stronger

in expression: it is characteristic of her to recommend that punishments should be so contrived that they should appear the natural consequence of the fault, and that no faults should be punished in such a way as to make children think themselves objects of contempt. Her garden inspired "The Sensitive Plant," and she was, says Medwin, "one of the few persons with whom the Shelleys were intimate."

When Shelley wrote "The Cenci" he discussed the scenes with Mary beforehand; he read "Don Juan" aloud to her, and they shared Virgil and Lucretius; they were busy translating Spinoza together. Mary was anxious for Shelley's fame, and was querulous at the frivolity of "The Witch of Atlas," thus calling forth "How my dear Mary,—are you critic-bitten?"

In 1820 Mary and Claire "find something to fight about every day," and Claire went away as a lady-companion to Florence. Shelley was still very fond and considerate of her, and enjoyed perfect friendly intimacy with her; his language was affectionate, and he called her his "best girl." When he thought she would be happier with them he invited her back, and just before his death she returned. He made her an allowance to help her peace and independence. Time after

time Shelley discussed with her the fate of her Allegra—now in Byron's charge—and attempted to make Byron see and give way to her wishes. She had no kinder or better friend than Shelley. But it was assumed or asserted by some that Claire was his mistress, that she had sent a child by him to the Foundling Hospital, that Shelley ill-treated his wife. In August 1821 Mary had to write to a friend in Venice:

> To defend him to whom I have the happiness to be united, whom I love and esteem beyond all living creatures, from the foulest calumnies. . . . You knew Shelley, you saw his face, and could you believe them? . . . Need I say that the union between my husband and myself has ever been undisturbed. Love caused our first imprudence—love which, improved by esteem, a perfect trust one in the other, a confidence and affection which, visited as we have been by severe calamities (have we not lost two children?), has increased daily and knows no bounds. . . . Those who know me believe my simple word—it is not long ago that my father said in a letter to me that he had never known me utter a falsehood—but you, easy as you have been to credit evil, who may be more deaf to truth—to you I swear by all that I hold sacred upon heaven and earth, by a vow which I should die to write if I affirmed a falsehood—I swear by the life of my child, by my blessed beloved child, that I know the accusations to be false.

In 1820 Shelley had said of his wife that it was not their custom to divide their

pleasures "when we can help it." But Mrs. Shelley, having the care of children and so careless a husband, had grown older than he, and to him this must often have seemed coldness, as will surprise nobody who has seen Mrs. Shelley's portrait. Consequently Shelley sometimes knew the need of friends who could "feel and understand" as Mary did not; he could regard her calmly, admire her powers, and yet see in her a lack of power to "excite the sympathy indispensable" to the application of her powers to domestic life. At another time he wished to retire from the world and with her, and Mary herself says somewhere that Shelley and she have vowed to go to Greece, should it be free, to "one of those beautiful islands where earth, ocean, and sky form the Paradise"; for she and Claire joined Shelley in his enthusiasm for the revolutionary movement in Naples, Genoa, and Greece, and Prince Mavrocordato was teaching her Greek. It is noticeable also that at Pisa, near Trelawny, Williams, Byron and others, Shelley saw much more of the men, and that Mary remarked on their flocking together "as they do not like fetching a walk with their absurd womankind."

Among the newest of Shelley's friends were Edward Williams and his wife Jane. Mary told Claire that she was "certainly very

pretty," but "wanted animation." Shelley told her that she was "an extremely pretty and gentle woman, apparently not *very* clever," but he liked her very much after only seeing her for an hour. Later, Mary added that she had "a very pretty voice, and a taste and ear for music which is almost miraculous," and that the harp was her favourite instrument. Shelley found her upon further acquaintance a woman of sensibility, but not much imagination. Her guitar's most enchanting music, with sailing and reading Spanish dramas, helped to make the charm of the "divine bay" where his last days were spent. Jane Williams was the comforter of Shelley's broken colloquial poem, "Sleep, sleep on": having mesmerised him, as she sometimes did for physical pain, she asked him "How may your malady be cured?" and he replied, "What would cure me that would kill me," in almost the words of that poem. To her he sent the "Best and brightest, Come away," "Now the last day of many days," and "Ariel to Miranda."

Late in 1820 Shelley met Emilia Viviani in the convent of S. Anna, a girl who had been shut up there with her sister for two years because their mother feared their rivalry with her lover. She was beautiful and made for love. Mary and Claire as well as Shelley became attached to her, and visited her and

sent her presents of books. Medwin described her :

Her profuse black hair, tied in the most simple knot, after the manner of a Greek muse in the Florence Gallery, displayed to its full height her brow, fair as that of the marble of which I speak. She was also of about the same height as the antique. Her features possessed a rare faultlessness and almost Grecian contour, the nose and forehead making a straight line. Her eyes had the sleepy voluptuousness, if not the colour, of Beatrice Cenci's. They had, indeed, no definite colour, changing with the changing feeling, to dark or light, as the soul animated them. Her smile was deficient in sweetness, her voice wanted melody, and sounded loud to an English ear. . . . She gesticulated too much, and her features were too much in motion.

She wrote back to her "adored Mary," her "dear brother," and "adorato sposo." Her only hope of escape had been in a marriage arranged by her parents before she had met the intended man. Medwin went to see her and was reminded of Margaret in "Faust":

There was a lark in the *parloir*, that had lately been caught. "Poor prisoner," said she, looking at it compassionately, "you will die of grief! How I pity thee! What must thou suffer, when thou hearest in the clouds, the songs of thy parent birds, or some flocks of thy kind on the wing, in search of other skies—of new fields—of new delights! But like me, thou wilt be forced to remain here always—to wear out thy miserable existence here. Why can I not release thee?"

This, he thinks, might have been the origin of "Poor captive bird" in the "Epipsychidion" which she afterwards inspired. If only she could escape. She was willing to go anywhere with the Shelleys; for she did not and could never love any thing or person so much as them. "In friendship," she said, speaking in the language of Shelley, "everything must be in common; few, indeed, very few are the persons who know this sublime and sweet Divinity; but we know it, and that is enough!" She wrote verse as well as prose, and in her rapturous address to "The True Love" may be felt the same spirit as in "Epipsychidion":

> Love! soul of the world! Love the source of all that is good, of all that is lovely! What would the universe be, failing thy creative flame? A horrible desert. But far from this, it is the sole shadow of all goodness, of all loveliness, and of all felicity. Of that love I speak, that possessing itself of all our soul, of our entire will, sublimes and raises one, above every other individual of the same species; and all energetic, all pure, all divine, inspires none but actions that are magnanimous, and worthy of the followers of that sweet and omnipotent deity . . . He becomes a supereminent being, and as such altogether incomprehensible. The universe—the vast universe, no longer capable of bounding his ideas, his affections, vanishes from before his sight. The soul of him who loves, disdains restraint—nothing can restrain it. It lances itself out of the created, and creates in the infinite a world for itself,

and for itself alone, how different from this obscure and fearful den!—is in the continued enjoyment of the sweetest ecstasy, is truly happy. But where is he, susceptible of such love? Where? Who is capable of inspiring it? Oh love! I am all love. I cannot exist without love! My soul—my mortal frame—all my thoughts and affections, all that which I am, transfigures itself into one sole sentiment of love, and that sentiment will last eternally. Without Love, life would become to me insupportable—the world an inhospitable and desolate desert, only haunted by spectres, so terrible to my sight that to fly from them, I could cast myself into the mysterious abode of death. . . .

Love has no wish but for virtue—Love inspires virtue—Love is the source of actions the most magnanimous, of true felicity—Love is a fire that burns and destroys not, a mixture of pleasure and of pain, a pain that brings pleasure, an essence, eternal, spiritual, infinite, pure, celestial.

Early in January Shelley said that Emilia continued to enchant him infinitely. In the middle of the month he told Claire that she need not fear "any mixture of that which you call love" in his affection. By the middle of February he was sending the finished poem, "Epipsychidion," to his publishers with the desire that it should not be considered as his own—"indeed, in a certain sense, it is a production of a portion of me already dead"; and that it was being written during January might be conjectured from his mention of the *Vita Nuova* in the "Advertisement," as a book

he was reading to Mary in that month. At the end of April Shelley heard that Emilia was to marry, and a great weight would thus be taken off his mind. In March 1822 Mary told Mrs. Gisborne that Emilia was married, and "we hear that she leads him and his mother (to use a vulgarism) a devil of a life" —a manner of expression not incompatible with some malice on her part. For six years, says Medwin, Emilia led a life of purgatory, and then broke the chain with her father's consent and retired to "a long disused and dilapidated house in the Mahremma" to die.

Practically all of Shelley's poetry, and certainly all that is of any value, was written after his first marriage, nor does he appear to have written any personal love-poetry before then. But it was in 1814, at the age of twenty-two, and at the time of his first meetings with Mary that Shelley's individuality first appeared almost without alloy in poetry. This clever and enthusiastic girl came to him at a time of stress, and accompanied him during the sublime but tranquillising hours of his wandering through France and his retirement among the Alps. She was like the veiled maid in "Alastor" of whom he speaks exactly as he spoke to Mary:

> Her voice was like the voice of his own soul
> Heard in the calm of thought.

And this again reminds us of Shelley's own words about a boyish friendship, "a profound and sentimental attachment to one of the same sex," which "rejects with disdain all thoughts but those of an elevated and imaginative character"; "the tones of his voice," he says, "were so soft and winning that every word pierced into my heart; and their pathos was so deep, that in listening to him the tears have involuntarily gushed from my eyes."

Like that maid in "Alastor" Mary could speak to him, as she did to Hogg, of "Knowledge and truth and virtue. . . ."

> And lofty hopes of divine liberty,
> Thoughts the most dear to him, and poesy.

The dedication of "The Revolt of Islam" to Mary acknowledges the debt—

> How beautiful and calm and free thou wert
> In thy young wisdom, when the mortal chain
> Of custom thou didst burst and rend in twain. . . .

The same thought less substantially expressed is to be found in the blank verse lines "To Harriet" written in 1812: this first love gave him his sense of eternity. Mary and the "serener hour" of a united home and friends returned, had been "the parents of the song." An echo of this praise was sounded in the words of Laon:

In me, communion with this purest being
Kindled intenser zeal, and made me wise
In knowledge, which, in hers mine own mind seeing,
Left in the human world few mysteries. . . .

and

Thus, Cythna mourned with me the servitude
In which the half of humankind were viewed
Victims of lust and hate, the slaves of slaves. . . .

and in Cythna's own words, varied more than once in later cantos:

Can man be free if woman be a slave?

On the practical question of woman suffrage two years later he was doubtful, but said that he "would be the last to withhold his vote from any system which might tend to an equal and full development of the capacities of all living beings." It is significant that the one who rears "the torch of Truth afar" in this poem is a woman, the maiden Cythna; and that "chiefly women" answered her strong speech that tore the veil from "Nature and Truth and Liberty and Love." Mrs. Shelley justly remarked in her note that for the hero nourished in dreams of virtue "he created a woman such as he delighted to imagine—full of enthusiasm for the same objects"—like herself. Women there can be no doubt helped to sustain the long, the too

long soaring flight of his spirit, footless like a bird of Paradise; women were the natural society of one who was disgusted, as Mary Shelley says he was by Pecchiani, at the telling of "a dirty story." They preserved for him that belief expressed first in the words of Asia:

> Common as light is love,
> And its familiar voice wearies not ever . . .
> It makes the reptile equal to the God.

Even his Prometheus is half a woman with his love-speech to Asia:

> We will entangle birds and flowers and beams
> Which twinkle on the fountain's brim, and make
> Strange combinations out of common things,
> Like human babes in their brief innocence.

He reminds us of Shelley's memorable combination of "meek and bold" as an ideal in the dedication to "The Revolt of Islam" and "innocent and bold" in "Epipsychidion."

With Shelley love was always either a winged rapture threatened with such a sudden end as the bolt that pierced the brain of the eagle in the "Ode to Liberty," or a retreat to an Ionian isle as in the letter to Mary already quoted and in "Epipsychidion," or, sometimes in combination with the retreat, a union for the perfectibility of mankind in virtue and

beauty. To "faint" with love is a common feature of his poetry: look, for example, at the phases "I die, I faint, I fail"—"I faint, I perish with my love"—"Faint with love, the Lady of the South." In the same way this faintness is associated with colour and fragrance, as in the "azure moss and flowers so sweet the sense faints picturing them," and, in "Epipsychidion":

> And from the moss violets and jonquils peep,
> And dart their arrowy odour through the brain
> Till you might faint with that delicious pain.

In the same poem, fragrance is associated with love, and both together with faintness in:

> Warm fragrance seemed to fall from her light dress
> And her loose hair; and where some heavy tress
> The air of her own speed has disentwined,
> The sweetness seems to satiate the faint wind;
> And in the soul a wild odour is felt. . . .

In "Madonna, wherefore hast thou sent to me" he says definitely that he is one "in whom love ever made health like a heap of embers soon to fade."

His poems were either written at the moment of intense feeling which they describe or with such ecstasy as to revive it, and in "To Constantia singing" (which was for Claire Clairmont), he actually says:

> Even while I write, my burning cheeks are wet. . . .

Asia's "My soul is an enchanted boat" seems a revival of this same inspiration. But it is rare for his love-poems to suggest even as much as this one the woman to whom it is addressed, nameless or not. He usually depicts himself, and even himself in such a way as to suggest not a man, but rather a spirit. The dedication of "The Revolt of Islam" stands almost alone in its serious reference to the intellectual inspiration of companionship. "Bird thou never wert" is true not of his skylark alone. Not only his "One word is too often profaned" narrates "the desire of the moth for the star." In "Epipsychidion" he is lured by the beloved "towards sweet Death." "I arise from dreams of thee" ends with:

> My cheek is cold and white, alas!
> My heart beats loud and fast;
> Oh! press it to thine own again
> Where it must break at last.

In "We meet not as we parted" the kiss of love is "the death which a heart so true sought in your briny dew."

This is far other than what we should be led to expect by Mrs. Shelley's Preface, where she says:

> Shelley s conception of love was exalted, absorbing, allied to all that is purest and noblest in our nature, and warmed by earnest passion; such it

appears when he gave it a voice in verse. Yet he was usually averse to expressing these feelings, except when idealised. . . .

She is thinking of the love described in "Alastor," "The Revolt of Islam," "Prometheus Unbound," and parts of "Epipsychidion." There Shelley was biassed by his view of what love might be or ought to be, by his doctrine that "to divide is not to take away." Where he sings directly in the first person he forgets this: he expresses the delirium of desire or of despair. Only where he writes for a lady who is to see the poem, as in those sent to Jane Williams, is he turned from this method to a beautiful ceremonious celebration of an impassioned friendship. Even in these poems the character of the woman, in body or mind, is barely hinted at. In the poems of passion the woman is invisible; the emotion is everything; and what is brought before us is the desire of a man, and the idea of woman rising in hesitating reply. Whether an individual woman gave the impulse to the best of his love-poems or not, they seem hardly meant for mortal flesh, and no others raise so little the question of their immediate application or lend themselves so readily to another. "The Question" has almost a humorous charm among poems of this class; for it describes

a dream, the gathering of a nosegay of flowers, and then the hastening to a spot where he might present it—"Oh, to whom?" This, however, is a poem rather of amorous compliment than of passion. But of those which clearly were due to one woman and to a definite situation, it is remarkable how many are obscure like "When passion's trance," and how many were left unfinished like "We meet not as we parted."

It is, perhaps, not in place to say much here about the well-known facts of Shelley's life, and above all the fact that he left his first wife when he had ceased to love her and went off with Mary Godwin, and that in his absence Harriet drowned herself. There is nothing else to be said against Shelley in his relations with women, unless it be that he caused his second wife some days of unhappiness and suspicion by his open admission in speech and writing of his strong likings for other women. Mr. Clutton Brock, his sober critic, points out that "Judged by the standard of ordinary morality he comes off so well that no one need fear to apply it to him." But even he falls into the error of indicating at certain points what Shelley might have done to save himself and others from suffering. He imputes it as a fault that Shelley ceased to love Harriet, and "could

not exercise his will and reason to maintain his love for her." I do not think that any man to-day is in a position to say more than that in this or that case he acted in a way which was disastrous: I do not believe the poet could have taken the critic's posthumous advice if he had been there to give it, or even that if he had he would have been better off. The critic admits that the poet's inability to submit to routine was part of his genius. It was like fresh air to him. Take it away and you have something different—something good, possibly better, but not Shelley. And to say that his faults—*e.g.* his desertion of Harriet—had nothing to do with his genius because that had not yet discovered itself, is to say what is unlikely and cannot be proved; while it is rash to imply that if he had overcome his dislike of Harriet, used "a little sagacity," and gone on living with her (as a man without energy or freshness, or a man who was never to write "Epipsychidion," might have done), things would have been better or quite well; for it is at least conceivable that both Shelley and Harriet would then have committed suicide. The case has been dwelt on too much, at first because, though it may have had nothing to do with it, it was followed by Harriet's miserable death, and now because it has became a sort of test case of the

"privileges of genius." There is no privilege in these matters except the lack of conscience, and Shelley had not that. The desertion was consistent with his character, and so far as can be seen, it did not weaken his character nor weigh heavily in the scale against the later acts of his life. The same critic offers similar advice to Claire Clairmont. She might, he says, "have been happy and useful and healthy in her mind if she had married a kind and sensible husband and borne him children." She might. But she would not by any means certainly have been more fortunate if she had understood that "love which begins with the perception of loveliness is a mere luxury, unless it changes into a trained habit; that men must exercise their will to make it that; and that marriage is intended to make them exercise their will in that way." It is true that love and marriage so regarded by a severe and upright nature may lead to greater happiness or a higher life than passionate, if innocent, irregularity. But the alternative is not a perfect but an ordinary marriage, such as Mary Shelley forced upon their Italian servant and their maid, which was anything but fortunate. It has also to be remembered that Shelley's greatest mistake was in making an ordinary marriage with Harriet, not to

gratify her instincts and appetite but to do a kindness to her; and that one of his most successful acts was his union with Mary, which could not at first be legitimised as marriage.

Chapter Eight: The Tenth Muse

THE strength of various poetical conventions and the absence of biographical materials make early poetry, such as Chaucer's, all but impervious to this our curiosity. All that we know is that Chaucer married somewhere between the ages of twenty-six and thirty-four, and was unhappy with his wife, and that when he was forty he committed the offence of *raptus* which may have been rape and may have been abduction for purposes of gain. As a poet he adopts in one place or another almost all the conventional and traditional views of women as the plague of men. In "The Legende of Good Women," therefore, he imagines himself accused of being an enemy to love as the translator of the satirical "Romance of the Rose" and the creator of the perfidious Cresyde, and that poem makes polite but not convincing amends by painting "women true in loving all their lives"—Cleopatra the "martyr" for whom Antonius thought the world well lost; Lucrece who reminds him of what Christ said:

> Not so grete feythe in al that londe he
> Fonde as in a woman; and this is no lye:

and Dido whose betrayal makes him exclaim:

O sely woman, ful of innocence,
Ful of pitee, of trouble, and conscience,
What makèd you to man to trusten so?

The thought in this last line is varied several times in his poetry, as:

Beware of men and hearken what I say,

or as:

Beware ye women of your subtle foe,

and is his one concession to the woman's point of view, outside of the words of the Wife of Bath. She, of course, knew all the proverbs against women and rolled them upon her tongue, making at length this most pertinent comment:

By God! if wommen haddé written stories,
As clerke's han withinne hire oratories,
They wolde han writen of men moore wikkednesse
Than all the mark of Adam may redresse.

That he loved women and the beauty of women, women than whom there was never creature "less mannish," there is no doubt, but he was so pleased with what the French and Latin poets had said of them before him that he delighted to repeat it in his own tongue. "Hyde, Absolom, thy gilte tresses clere" with its burden of "My lady comith, that al this may disteyne" is a compliment worthy of any mistress, but whatever its

origin, it is used in honour of the God of Love's Queen. He paints this Queen, too, in words which would so honour a mortal woman that it is quite certain a mortal woman was in his mind, just as when he drew Dido, so young and lusty with her glad eyes that if God would have a love, he says, "whom should he love but this lady sweet." There, at least, he has no need to qualify his words with "as I have heard said," as he does when he makes Dido lie awake tossing about in bed "as do these lovers, as I have heard said." It sounds a little scornful towards "these lovers," and yet he opens "The Death of Blanche the Duchess" with a sleepless night, and explains that he cannot sleep for a love-sickness eight years old. He is to lament his patroness, Blanche, Duchess of Lancaster, who died of pestilence in 1369, whom Froissart also lamented. No man in love could have chosen a more delicious method of enriching his sorrow than by the device of making the mourning Duke relate how he first met the beautiful Blanche, and how he made a song for her:

> Lorde, hyt maketh myn herte lyght
> Whan I thenke on that swete wyght
> That is so semely on to see;
> And wisshe to God it myght so bee
> That she wolde holde me for hir knyght,
> My lady that is so fair and bright!

There is no reason to suppose that John of Gaunt ever told Chaucer how he courted Blanche of Lancaster; but very good reason in the warmth and freshness of this poem to suppose that Chaucer was writing of his own love, possibly with the hope that the woman, whoever it was, might see or hear the poem. Of all the poems written for noble patronesses, "The Death of Blanche the Duchess" is one of those least handicapped by its purpose. It retains more undeniable evidence of love than any of the professed love-poems written by Chaucer or ascribed to him.

Some of the most delightful of John Skelton's poems were ostensibly written for noble ladies. The Countess of Surrey, mother of the poet Earl of Surrey, was one of his patrons and at her suggestion, late in his life (1460[?]–1529) a garland of laurel was presented to him by ten ladies at Sheriff Hutton Castle in Yorkshire. He replied with a poem for each—Lady Elizabeth Howard, Lady Mirriell Howard, Lady Anne Dakers of the South, Margery Wentworth, Margaret Tylney, Jane Blenner-Hasset, Isabell Pennell, Gertrude Statham, Isabell Knyght, and Margaret Hussey. The poem for Mistress Margaret Hussey is the well-known

> Merry Margaret
> As midsummer flower.

That for Mistress Isabell Pennell is almost equally worth knowing with its:

> Be Saynt Mary, my lady,
> Your mammy and your dady
> Brought forth a godely babi!
> My Mayden Isabell . . .

Little is known of Skelton, though very much was rumoured, and he became a ribald mythical character for two centuries; but it appears that when he was a parson at Diss he lived in comfortable concubinage with a woman whom he made the mother of many children and afterwards his wife.

The Earl of Surrey, son of Skelton's patroness, was one of the first English poets to take his own or his professed love openly as a subject of poetry. He was married in 1532, when about sixteen, to Lady Frances Vere, daughter of the Earl of Oxford, but his songs and sonnets were not for her. Geraldine was the mistress of that so-called "affection of the imagination—the daydream of an ardent fancy," and by some she has been identified with the Lady Elizabeth, daughter of Gerald, Earl of Kildare. That she was only twelve years old and the daughter of a powerful earl is the objection; but it need not have been such to a man of Surrey's turbulent and imprudent character, who finally went to the scaffold

upon a charge of treasonably painting the arms of the King in conjunction with his own proper arms, and wishing to be held heir to the Crown. This character, indeed, is not wholly consistent with the portrait of himself as a lover painted in his poems, wishing for night "more covertly to plain"; probably he was prevented from any direct realism by the influence of Petrarch, whom he translated. Only two of the poems mention Geraldine by name, and there is no indication that the rest are for her, but the objection that she would not have been the subject of such poems by a married nobleman may be overcome by supposing that these two, perhaps all of them, were very little known until after Surrey's execution in 1547; they were not printed until 1557. Until the convention of these and other such poems is so thoroughly mastered that we are no more troubled by it than were the poet's contemporaries, or than we are by to-day's convention, it is unfair to judge. But the end of "When Windsor walls sustain'd my wearied arm," where he recounts how he half bent to throw himself down in grief, and the lines where he says that his lady never drew aside her hood after she first knew his grievous love, would be some evidence for an underlying passion, even if the noble lines written during imprisonment at Windsor had not survived.

There he tells how he and his companions used to play tennis at Windsor:

> With dazzled eyes oft we by gleams of love
> Have miss'd the ball and got sight of our dame,
> To bait her eyes, which kept the leads above. . . .

and how they made the secret groves resound

> Of pleasant plaint, and of our ladies' praise.

With a difference, it reminds us of Shelley's recollection of his boyish friendship—

> We used to speak of the ladies with whom we were in love, and I remember that our usual practice was to confirm each other in the everlasting fidelity in which we had bound ourselves towards them and towards each other.

But it is not known that Geraldine was at Windsor then, and we have to fall back upon the unsatisfying fact that the poem is tinged with love, but of whom we do not know. Some of the poems at least are dramatic lyrics; two, for example, being meant to express the thoughts of a woman whose lover is upon the sea. What Symonds said of "Astrophel and Stella" may also be said of these; that "the chosen form of composition both traditionally and artistically lent itself" to "artistic exaltation" and "poetical exaggeration," though "poetical" is here used in a base and vulgar sense.

The first series of this kind which has received a plausible full explanation is "Astrophel and Stella." These poems were written probably in 1581–2, and addressed to Penelope Devereux, who had become Lady Rich in 1580 or 1581. Sidney had first met her in 1575 when he was twenty-one and she thirteen. They had been half affianced a little later, with affection on her side, it has been supposed, but not on his. At any rate 1581 was the year, not only of Stella's marriage but of Sidney's drawing near to Frances Walsingham, who became his wife in 1583. The sonnets, circulated long before Sidney's death in 1586, but not published until 1591, suggest few acts or events, nothing but Astrophel's addresses, Stella's chaste confession of love, a kiss, and a quiet despair and farewell.

Penelope, it was said, was married against her will, and there was discord between her and Lord Rich from the first day. Certain it is that she became Sir Charles Blount's mistress, bore him three children, and became his wife in 1605, after being divorced. A knowledge of these facts is probably necessary to an interest in more than a small minority of the poems.

There is no external evidence for or against believing that the sonnets and lyrics were all

directly connected with Sidney's love of Penelope and meant for her eye. It is more probable that his passion broke forth first upon either her betrothal or her marriage, and that this was the occasion of his beginning to write the poems of the series, but that once he had begun he had needed a fresh immediate impulse only now and then. His lips are sweet, he says, "inspired with Stella's kiss"; and

> Stella, think not that I by verse seek fame . . .
> If thou praise not, all other praise is shame.

Over and over again he avers that he "in pure simplicity breathes out the flames which burn within his heart." And not only does he attribute his writing to her influence, but his moral nature. In reply to a friend who has grieved him by saying that his love has plunged his soul in the mire of sinful thoughts, he says:

> If that be sin which doth the manners frame,
> Well staid with truth in word and faith of deed,
> Ready of wit, and fearing naught but shame;
> If that be sin, which in fixt hearts doth breed
> A loathing of all loose unchastity,
> Then love is sin, and let me sinful be.

And it is true that in "Astrophel and Stella" Sidney justifies the unique opinion of his contemporaries upon his character and

poetry. Compare the poems in "Arcadia," and how few of them are equal to the best or second best of "Astrophel and Stella."

In some we of to-day can see nothing but the convention surviving; yet it is unjust to call even these "merely artificial." All are artificial, with an even texture and balanced form which probably means that Astrophel is already independent of Stella, but some are happily contrived and some are not. In fact it is where the verse is most obviously related to facts that it offends those who, like Symonds, regard some as "merely artificial," where, *e.g.* Sidney refers to Lord Rich with—

> Is it not evil that such a devil wants horns?

Yet the sonnet describing how he missed a sight of her on a wet night, and the lyric relating to his temptation and her refusal, "No, no, no, no, my dear, let be" are not the poorest of the series.

There were times when Sidney was not inclined even to write too seriously of his love, or has adopted a method laying him open to this suspicion, as when he recommends her to think of his case as she thinks of lovers in stories and weeps:

> Then think, my dear, that you in me do read
> Of lover's ruin some thrice-sad tragedy.
> I am not I; pity the tale of me!

Of the best the style alone is enough testimony to their inspiration—the style of:

> Highway, since you my chief Parnassus be,
> And that my Muse, to some ears not unsweet,
> Tempers her words to trampling horses' feet
> More oft than to a chamber melody . . .

Not unexpectedly or inexplicably the two sonnets of retrospection or farewell are nearly, if not quite, the finest. All is over, and the past contemned, and yet he must speak in the very tones which were taught him by the past love.

To come for a moment to Shakespeare, it has to be said that a complete silence on the subject might now be held until full consideration has been given to Mr. Frank Harris' methods and results. There has been no other Shakespearean criticism equally stimulating, and Shakespeare ought to be read now as he was never read before. Mr. Harris believes that Shakespeare "owes the greater part of his renown to Mary Fitton," the licentious Maid of Honour to Queen Elizabeth, twice a mistress, and twice a wife, who makes a very suitable original for the "dark lady" of the sonnets: "it was her falseness that brought him to self-knowledge and knowledge of life." Mr. A. C. Bradley points out in the later plays, "Hamlet,"

"Measure for Measure," "Othello," "Troilus and Cressida," "King Lear," and "Timon," an undertone of disgust concerning the vices of "drunkenness and sexual corruption"; Mr. J. M. Robertson notices in the later Shakespeare a "peculiarly true and new expression of the living grace of womanhood, always, it is true, abstracted to the form of poetry and skilfully purified from the blemishes of the actual, but none the less convincing and stimulating": but both are inclined to attribute these incompatible different qualities to one experience, namely, that which Mr. Harris with more confidence calls his love and lust for Mary Fitton. Mr. Harris has used his admirable method and intuition with perhaps an excess of indulgent pleasure, but he establishes beyond assault that Shakespeare owed very much to the passion for a woman when he was about thirty, and that this passion is the one which inspired the later sonnets. Mr. Harris is, however, needlessly torrential in dealing with the sonnets addressed to a man, when he says that "it is pose and flunkeyism and the hope of benefits to come, and not passion," that inspired them. He seems to assume that the only form of passion and inspiration is that which he implies when he speaks of "panting" Sappho "gasping out" when "lust had made her body a lyre

of deathless music." On the contrary it is not reasonable to doubt that Shakespeare was speaking truth, whether discovered by himself or not, when he wrote (herein agreeing with Donne, who says:

> Grief brought to numbers cannot be so fierce,
> For he tames it, that fetters it in verse)

> O absence, what a torment wouldst thou prove,
> Were it not thy sour leisure gave sweet leave
> To entertain the time with thoughts of love . . .

and that love, albeit not the sting of instant desire, brought forth—

> When in the chronicle of wasted time
> I see descriptions of the fairest wights,
> And beauty making beautiful old rhyme
> In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights.

Even if it could be proved that there was some flunkeyism in Shakespeare's attitude towards Herbert, the sonnets are not flunkeyism. What is amazing about "In the old age black was not counted fair," and the following sonnets, is that they seem not only to be exquisitely fit for the utterance of a passion, but to be the passion itself, or contemporaneous with it. Never was abandonment before or since expressed with such concealment of the art that we might suppose the two to be one, the art and the abandonment. But the essential condition is not

that they should be the exact reproduction of a passion, but that they should be approved as a fit expression of one by men; and this they fulfil as no others do.

If at all these sonnets are to be equalled by the love-poems of Donne, those recreations of his youth which, according to the incredible words of Walton, were written before he was twenty. Donne was "by nature highly passionate, but more apt to reluct at the excesses of it," and it is assumed that in his young days at home and abroad, as a man of pleasure and some fortune, he gave many of his days and nights to women. The feelings in many of the poems attributed to this period are not what most men would admit to be love. "The sun rising," for example, with its opening—

> Busy old fool, unruly sun,
> Why dost thou thus,
> Through windows, and through curtains, call
> on us,

has none of the passion of the Provençal poet's misery "that day should come so soon." It is what Mr. Gosse calls it, a "hymn of sturdy virile satisfaction." A little more passionate, perhaps, is another "Break of day" with its "Love which in spite of darkness brought us hither should in despite of

light keep us together." In one of his songs Donne says that there is no woman true as well as fair; not only so, but she will be false "to two or three": "Woman's Inconstancy" shows him matching his falseness with hers: he delights to sing:

> He is stark mad, whoever says,
> That he hath been in love an hour . . .

and avers:

> The loving wretch that swears,
> 'Tis not the bodies marry, but the minds,
> Which he in her angelic finds,
> Would swear as justly, that he hears,
> In that day's rude hoarse minstrelsy, the spheres.
> Hope not for mind in women; at their best,
> Sweetness and wit they are, but mummy possess'd.

It is of the essence of these early loves that he says:

> Makes virtue woman? Must I cool my blood
> Till I both be, and find one, wise and good?
> May barren angels love so.

And the twentieth elegy is the finest expression of his enjoyment of the body, so intense here in fact that he is not so far removed as he appears from that lover who "could not see her body for her soul": its title is "To his mistress going to bed" and its conclusion:

Full nakedness! All joys are due to thee:
As souls unbodied, bodies unclothed must be
To taste whole joys. Gems which you women use
Are like Atalanta's ball cast in men's views;
That when a fool's eye lighteth on a gem,
His earthly soul might court that, not them.
Like pictures, or like books' gay coverings made
For laymen, are all women thus array'd.
Themselves are only mystic books, which we
—Whom their imputed grace will dignify—
Must see reveal'd. Then, since that I may know,
As liberally as to thy midwife show
Thyself; cast all, yea, this white linen hence;
There is no penance due to innocence:
To teach thee, I am naked first; why then,
What needst thou have more covering than a man?

If this were only the insolence of libertinism to a passive instrument, it would not be surprising that Donne should "reluct at the excesses of it"; but mere libertinism, even if allied to genius, would be more likely to content itself with deeds not words, to be followed by the ferocity of repentance and by sackcloth upon the body, ashes on the head and in the mouth; and although Donne may have condescended to please Walton by flouting the early poems, he never went back upon them in writing or action, but, whatever he did, did it to excess and to the astonishment and confusion of the many.

There is another class of love-poems including those which were certainly written

for his wife, but many more on which biographers can throw not even a marsh light. To this class belongs the "Ecstasy," a picture of two lovers with hands engrafted:

> Our souls—which to advance their state,
> Were gone out—hung 'twixt her and me.
>
> And whilst our souls negotiate there
> We like sepulchral statues lay;
> All day, the same our postures were,
> And we said nothing, all the day.

This ecstasy teaches them that it is not sex which they love; that their senses are not "dross to us but alloy"; and lastly that—

> Love's mysteries in souls do grow,
> But yet the body is his book.

This is the same love as in "His Picture":

> Here take my picture; though I bid farewell,
> Thine, in my heart, where my soul dwells, shall dwell.
> 'Tis like me now, but I dead, 'twill be more,
> When we are shadows both, than 'twas before.
> When weatherbeaten I come back; my hand
> Perhaps with rude oars torn, or sunbeams tann'd . . .

When, says the poem, the fools tax her for loving such a one, the picture shall say what he was, and she shall say—

> Do his hurts reach me? doth my worth decay?
> Or do they reach his judging mind, that he
> Should now love less, what he did love to see?

That which in him was fair and delicate,
Was but the milk, which in love's childish state
Did nurse it; who now is grown strong enough
To feed on that, which to weak tastes seems tough.

This love, it may be seen, has little to do with Petrarch, little to do with Cupid. If there is anything but subtlety in

I never stoop'd so low, as they
Which on an eye, cheek, lip, can prey . . .

it must be an expression of the inexpressibility of love, the craving for he knows not what, which is beyond sense and understanding. In "The Expostulation" he lets us see still a little more of the woman, and gives his love humanity by giving it a locality, when speaking of—

Those times when first I saw
Love in your eyes, that gave my tongue the law
To like what you liked; and at masks and plays
Commend the self-same actors, the same ways. . . .

Whether his wife or not, it was this woman perhaps who taught him the language he used afterwards in praising the dead girl, Elizabeth Drury, whom he had never known—

One, whose dear body was so pure and thin,
Because it need disguise no thought within;
'Twas but a through-light* scarf her mind to enroll,
Or exhalation breathed out from her soul . . .

* Through-light — *translucent.*

"The Relique" dwells upon the day when his body may be disinterred to admit another to his grave and men will see

A bracelet of bright hair about the bone—

and "all women shall adore us and some men"; and these verses shall teach them "what miracles we harmless lovers wrought":

First we loved well and faithfully,
Yet knew not what we loved, nor why;
Difference of sex we never knew,
No more than guardian angels do;
Coming and going we
Perchance might kiss, but not between those meals;
Our hands ne'er touch'd the seals,
Which nature, injured by late law, sets free.
These miracles we did; but now alas!
All measure, and all language, I should pass,
Should I tell what a miracle she was.

One of the rare qualities of this poetry is that the woman is apparently the man's equal. Her love is not sought; it has already been gained; yet it stands the test and the poet suggests her to us as a companion of perfect intimacy, and as far as can be imagined from the prostituted wife of his epithalamion, who

At the bridegroom's wish'd approach doth lie,
Like an appointed lamb, when tenderly
The priest comes on his knees, to embowel her.

Those which are or may be poems of marriage have to wait until our own day to find worthy companions in Browning's "One word more" and William Morris's "Message of the March Wind."

Herrick is the best example among English poets of the man of whom nothing is known except his poetry. The only facts beyond a few dates such as the year of his birth, 1591, and death, 1674, are that he was Vicar of Dean Prior in Devonshire, whence he was ejected in 1647, to be restored at the Restoration. It is possible that he was father to the illegitimate child of Thomasen Parsons, otherwise remembered as the recipient of a couplet in "Hesperides." He was probably never married, and for some time a sister-in-law, the widow of a brother, kept house for him. He made a poem upon the occasion, saying he would never take a wife to "crucify his life but

> A sister (in the stead
> Of wife) about I'll lead;
> Which I will keep embraced,
> And kiss, and yet be chaste."

It is characteristic of him to insist that the relation was to be chaste. He says that, though his muse was "jocund," his life was "chaste," and, again, that chaste he lived without a wife. This may be literally true,

whether or not the reason was one which he would have liked published. He is gross and physical, possibly because the terms which he uses have not the same reality for him as for others. It was, perhaps, easy for him to be "wisely wanton" or "cleanly wanton" as he puts it. Literature, Greek, Latin and English, would have given him nine-tenths of what he says of women. In fact he repeats most things which have been said of them, from which we might conclude that he meant nothing. The rest is his own. It is Herrick himself who writes of women as if they were flowers, or even as if they were no more animate than their scented clothes. It is Herrick himself who likes to think of his "mistresses" about his dead body as another man might wish for flowers. For us there is something perfectly congruous with all this in the portrait which his recent biographer, Mr. Moorman, thinks a caricature, saying, "We may, perhaps, accept the lustrous eye, the thick, tight curls and the curious beak-like nose which calls to mind the busts of the Emperor Vespasian; but the fat stolidity of the rest of the face, together with the grotesque neck, leaves us incredulous or indignant."

We need not be either incredulous or indignant. We may picture him a little big

man, a coarse man with a shrill voice and moist lips, smiling much and liking to talk about women but caring little for them. There is a dainty unreality in what he says of them which becomes laughable and grotesque in a poem like

Some ask'd me where the rubies grew,
  And nothing did I say:
But with my finger pointed to
  The lips of Julia.
Some ask'd how pearls did grow, and where;
  Then spoke I to my girl,
To part her lips, and show'd them there
  Two quarrelets of Pearl.

This calls into our mind a vision of the stout man actually telling "his girl" to part her lips and show her teeth to the gentlemen. However exquisite he is, he is not more real. However obscene he is, it is not with the obscenity of Nature. No more wonderful proof of the power of style can be found than the survival of the work of this trivial vicar, the author of "To Dianeme":

Sweet, be not proud of those two eyes
Which, starlike, sparkle in their skies;
Nor be you proud that you can see
All hearts your captives, yours yet free;
Be you not proud of that rich hair
Which wantons with the love-sick air;
Whenas that ruby which you wear,
Sunk from the tip of your soft ear,
Will last to be a precious stone
When all your world of beauty's gone.

No one has yet come to any certain conclusion as to the relation between strict truth and Herrick's statements in verse. Sometimes his verses relate to proved facts; usually there is no evidence, and it is safe to say that while composing the poet was histrionic, acting parts, and making others act parts, which often had little or nothing to do with reality. It is quite possible that he would make a poem out of another poet's thought for no other reason than his enjoyment of that thought, and a pretty fancy about women or a woman would be sufficient for the invention of a Perenna or Perilla to whom to dedicate that fancy.

Some idea of his independence of external experience may be gathered from the title of one poem: "Charge to his supposed wife when he travelled." It is an absurd poem, begging this supposed wife to be faithful in his absence, telling her:

> I am not jealous of thy faith,
> Or will be, for the axiom saith:
> He that doth suspect doth haste
> A gentle mind to be unchaste.

And yet he goes on to say:

> Banish consent, and 'tis no sin
> Of thine; so Lucrece fell and the
> Chaste Syracusian Cyane.

So Medullina fell; yet none
Of these had imputation
For the least trespass, 'cause the mind
Here was not with the act combined.

When Herrick attempts to do more than sing he usually is absurd.

His task was to write lyrics for marionettes. His "fresh and fragrant mistresses" are marionettes. They bear no resemblance to real women, and no man could write of real women so, at least without making them or himself either contemptible or ridiculous. Although he was a gross-looking man, with a thick neck, a big beak, and abundance of curly hair, his nature was diminutive. He liked little, delicate things, and, consciously or unconsciously, he created images of little things. How small and frail a thing he makes even himself appear in "To Robin Redbreast":

Laid out for dead, let thy last kindness be,
With leaves and moss-work for to cover me.
And while the wood-nymphs my cold corse inter,
Sing thou my dirge, sweet-warbling chorister!
For epitaph, in foliage, next write this:
Here, here, the tomb of Robin Herrick is.

This is in every way a miniature, and thoroughly characteristic. Another good example is "To the Little Spinners," an address to spiders which might have come

from a creature no bigger than they. It is no wonder, then, that he is perfect in writing of flowers. One of the few poems where his sadness seems more than a mincing simulation is the "Divination by a Daffodil":

> When a daffodil I see
> Hanging down his head towards me,
> Guess I may what I must be:
> First, I shall decline my head;
> Secondly, I shall be dead;
> Lastly, safely buried.

Flowers are nearer in stature and nature to his spirit than women, and that daffodil meant more than Anthea, though he writes to her:

> If, dear Anthea, my hard fate it be
> To live some few sad hours after thee,

and so on. In women he liked the white teeth, the cherry lips, the creamy skin, the dark eyes, as he might like fruits or cakes. They are all tiny, childish things, and at their best when he compares them with flowers. He does not treat them seriously, and he talks to a mother—Lady Crew—as if she would be willing, like the poet, to regard her dead child as a flower "hid here to spring again another year." In "To Primroses filled with Morning Dew" he calls the flowers "sweet babes." There is, for him at least,

some truth in the verses describing how "frolic virgins" became pansies. When he writes upon a dead child, "a pretty bud," he says that it was "lately made of flesh and blood"; and to him it really seems to have become a flower, without the grossness of humanity and mortality. If the poem "upon a lady that died in childbed and left a daughter behind her" relates to the death of any one known to him, it is an extraordinary revelation of his character, concluding as it does:

> The mother's power
> Lives in the pretty lady-flower.

No wonder that one thus inapprehensive of the physical facts of life could be so fearless and shameless, when he wrote of them, that a lady should say to him in a dream:

> Herrick, thou art too coarse to love.

It is not easy to explain this mingling of coarseness and delicacy, except by saying that the coarseness is in us, and in our view of facts which he transmuted for himself by his own miniature delicacy.

If only we knew as much of Herrick as Aubrey tells us of Sir John Suckling! He is remembered now chiefly as the author of "Why so pale and wan, fond lover?" and of that "Ballad upon a Wedding," where the

bride's feet beneath her petticoat "like little mice stole in and out," and her lower lip was so full and red that (surely) "some bee had stung it newly." The fact is that he wrote very little else which can be read by a man nowadays in his capacity of a human being.

Born in 1609 and dead in 1642 he professed to live for pleasure and to despise all else. He even professed some contempt for the writing of poetry. In his lively "Session of the Poets," where Apollo sits in judgment upon the Jacobean and Caroline poets, Suckling was called:

> But did not appear,
> But strait one whisper'd Apollo i' th' ear,
> That of all men living he cared not for 't,
> He loved not the Muses so well as his sport;
> And prized black eyes, or a lucky hit
> At bowls, above all the trophies of wit.

He died soon after he was thirty, and as he lived the life of a gentleman, a courtier, and a soldier, it meant considerable activity to write four plays, a quantity of lyrics, and a prose "Account of Religion by Reason." His contempt was a public vanity. In private he wrote according to his ability, and the exquisite format of one of his plays was conspicuous enough to be lampooned. He bought all the dresses for the performance

himself; no tinsel, all the lace pure gold and silver.

Suckling might well have felt at the age of twenty-five that a song was a trifle compared with the life he could lead among men. His life was, as Milton said a poet's life should be, a poem—a brilliant lyric poem, but with flaws, and with a strange, sudden end. The half-dozen pages on Suckling in Aubrey's "Brief Lives" are almost the most fascinating in that book. Like Donne he went early to the university, and by the time he was eighteen he had been several years at Cambridge and had travelled over much of Europe. He came back "an extraordinary accomplished gentleman," and was noted for being wittiest when most provoked. He was the greatest gallant and gamester of his time. His sisters came crying to the bowling-green for fear lest he should lose all their portions. When he had bad luck he would dress himself in his finest clothes, saying that it exalted his spirits, and that he had the best luck when he was most gallant. In 1639 he raised a troop of a hundred very handsome young men to join the expedition into Scotland. They were clad in white doublets, scarlet breeches, coats and hats, and contrasting feathers, and they were well horsed and armed, so as to be one of the

finest sights of the day. This vainglory brought another lampoon, which, says Aubrey, alleged "an inglorious charge against the Scots." Suckling's personal courage has been impugned, and it is said that he and several others set upon Sir John Digby outside a theatre, and that all were repulsed by one sword. Whatever was the truth of the matter, he was much rallied over it afterwards by ladies of his acquaintance. Aubrey mentions a magnificent and costly entertainment which he gave to a great number of young and beautiful ladies of quality in London. It sounds characteristic of Suckling. He provided "all the rareties that this part of the world could afford, and the last service of all was silk stockings and garters, and I think also gloves." When Strafford was in the Tower, Suckling joined the plot for rescuing him. He fled to France, and there, according to Aubrey, was reduced to poverty and took poison. Others say that a manservant killed him by placing an open razor in his boot. He died a bachelor, a man of middle stature and not strong, a brisk round eye, reddish face and dyspetic red nose, sandy-coloured hair, a beard naturally turned up "so that he had a brisk and graceful look."

In spite of the impudent cynicism of some poems, and even on account of it, there is

good reason to think that he took himself and others, and especially women, more seriously than he protested. If he were worth it, there is as much unsolved mystery and as strange a tale hidden in his poems as in Shakespeare's sonnets. He announced:

> A quick corse, methinks, I spy
> In ev'ry woman

and

> Women enjoy'd (whate'er before th' have been)
> Are like romances read.

Yet his "last remains" include both poems and letters which seem to give the lie to his shallow, jaunty callousness and weariness. The series of poems and letters connected by Mr. Thompson with one of the Bulkeleys of Beaumaris Castle are full of devotion and delicate expression. He said it was not love, but constancy, that harmed a man, and wrote the poem:

> Out upon it! I have lov'd
> Three whole days together;
> And am like to love three more,
> If it prove fair weather—

He concluded his natural and spirited "Ballad on a wedding" with the usually suppressed stanza:

> At length the candle's out; and now
> All that they had not done they do:
> What that is, who can tell?

But I believe it was no more
Than thou and I have done before
With Bridget and with Nell.

He wrote a song for the careless lover—

Ere I'll die for love, I'll fairly forego it.

He made a poem "against fruition," full of wisdom, concluding:

Then, fairest mistress, hold the power you have,
By still denying what we still do crave;
In keeping us in hopes strange things to see
That never were, nor are, nor e'er shall be.

Such poems, I suppose, he wrote particularly for men, as he wrote for himself, or for women, the lines "Upon L. M. weeping"—

Whoever was the cause your tears were shed,
May these my curses light upon his head . . .

or the song "When, dearest, I but think of thee." In his private letters to a woman he calls her "dear princess" and signs himself, like any other lover, "Madam, during life, your humblest servant," and his prose runs into blank verse in its excitement; writing to a man, he offers various cures for love, such as "a jolly glass and right company," incontinence, or marriage. Was the cause of his too extravagant libertinism and cynicism what

ıe almost said it was, in "The Guiltless nconstant"?—

> My first love, whom all beauties did adorn,
> Firing my heart, suppress it with her scorn;
> Since like the tinder in my breast it lies,
> By every sparkle made a sacrifice. . . .

It is not perfectly certain that these letters nd poems to his "dearest princess, Aglaura," vere founded upon a deep and undivided passion, but only that he did in private ondescend to use terms belonging to that ery convention of love which he scoffed at. The admirable letter to Falkland and the erious essay on religion, written with the ıelp of "a cartload of books," add further ouches to the character of a man whose birth and position and accomplishments lso remind us of Byron. There is no vidence for the chronological arrangement of poems or letters, and it is impossible to ell whether the flouting poems belong to an arly or a late period, or to both. The ynical poems belong to his age, the serious o himself. They suggest a society where vomen were over-flattered and under-valued, nd their sentiments are those which young nen, probably in all ages, feel called upon to xpress in the convivial company of many equals and no friends.

Thomas Carew, a friend of Suckling and ten years older, belonged to the same class as man and poet. He was a man of incontinent life, and according to his contemporaries was heavily rewarded for his amours. As Suckling was charged with cowardice and cheating at cards, so Carew was charged with slandering Lady Carleton and Sir Dudley Carleton, English ambassador at Venice, to whom he was secretary. He never married, but seems to have had at one time in view "an old galiasse of sixty-three," a widow. He died at about fifty "with the greatest remorse for that license and with the greatest manifestations of Christianity that his best friends could desire."

A number of his poems are addressed to "Celia," and Mr. Arthur Vincent thinks them all meant for a mistress met when he was under twenty-five and before he went to France with Lord Herbert of Cherbury. He says himself that no fair woman can come near him but he courts her. He has also a poem in which he says that fortune, honour, long life, children, friends, or a good wife, are nothing to "a wench about thirteen, already voted to the queen of lust and lovers." Suckling's poem "Upon my Lady Carlisle's walking in Hampton Court Gardens" reveals his friend Carew "undressing with the

eyes" that famous, much sung, and much loved beauty. In his "Rapture" he succeeded to admiration in showing that self-conscious libertine lust can be the theme, if not actually the inspiration, of fine poetry, and there—

> The hated name
> Of husband, wife, lust, modest, chaste, or shame
> Are vain and empty words, whose very sound
> Was never heard in that Elysian ground.
> All things are lawful there, that may delight
> Nature or unrestrained appetite. . . .

This is among the poems addressed to "Celia." He has a song "To a lady, not yet enjoyed by her husband," which begins, "Come, Celia," and it must be concluded either that his mistress married some one else or that "Celia" was only a name that pleased him. He says himself that he "ne'er more of private sorrow knew than from my pen some froward mistress drew." Like Suckling he counsels a young maid to refuse herself to her lovers. But, after all, perhaps the finest of his poems, certainly the finest of all except the "Rapture," is the song which every one knows:

> Ask me no more where Jove bestows
> When June is past, the fading rose. . .

This bears no signs of personality or locality;

it is conceited and metaphysical, and uses myths of no consequence to him or to us; and yet those first lines, perfect in their music of sound and suggestion, take us at once into their own world, and the rest has no business except to keep us there, and that, with so masterful an introduction, they can do easily and do with triumph. Such a poem shows how little need the lyric has of the best that is thought and said in the world. It is made of materials that are worth nothing and is itself yet beyond price.

Richard Crashaw's life (1613–1649) extended over almost the same period as Suckling's. His mother died in his infancy, and the chief influences upon his life must have been men, though with living men must be ranked the dead S. Teresa, canonised in 1622, whose life helped him to become a Catholic. His poems to that saint are as much love-poetry as is "Epipsychidion," and more so than the "As in a dusky and tempestuous night" or "Phœbus, arise!" of William Drummond, though these may have been written for the betrothed who died when he was thirty. Crashaw makes much play with words and phrases of amorous association, and then cries out with a wild note for the same religious ecstasy as the saint knew:

O thou undaunted daughter of desires!
By all thy dower of Lights and Fires;
By all the eagle in thee, all the dove;
By all thy lives and deaths of love;
By thy large draughts of intellectual day,
And by thy thirsts of love more large than they;
By all thy brim-filled Bowls of fierce desire,
By thy last Morning's draught of liquid fire;
By the full kingdom of that final kiss
That seized thy parting Soul, and sealed thee his;
By all the heavens that hast in him,
Fair sister of the Seraphim!
By all of Him we have in Thee;
Leave nothing of my Self in me.
Let me so read thy life, that I
Unto all life of mine may die.

He likes to dwell upon the virgin widowhood of S. Alexis' wife. The Magdalen inspires him to his extremest extravagance:

Well does the May that lies
Smiling in thy cheeks, confess
The April in thine eyes. . .

The translator of love-poems appears in the amorous metaphor of his "Answer for hope," *e.g.*—

Nor will the Virgin joys we wed
Come less unbroken to our bed,
Because that from the bridal cheek of bliss
Thou steal'st us down a distant kiss.

In the ode "prefixed to a little prayer-book given to a young gentlewoman," it might be excusable in the gentlewoman or in the modern reader to miss the purpose of the

devout poet in the profusion of his physical suggestions of human love. He wrote again to her a poem counselling this "heaven-designed soul" against the "gilded dunghills, glorious lies" of love. He comes as one among the suitors that besiege her "maiden breast," and he bids her, apparently fresh from some cross in love, to turn from thoughts of loving any "son of dust," to the "mighty lover of souls": finally, in the last two lines, the man and the God are openly placed upon the same footing:

> Your first choice fails, O! when you choose again
> May it not be amongst the sons of men.

In an epigram he expressed his desire to be married, but "to a single life." When he wrote "To his (supposed) mistress" the well-known "Whoe'er she be," it is characteristic of him to enumerate the rich and splendid things which she can do without, just as he enhances the heavenly love by depreciating the earthly. The poem is remarkable for its grave original beauty and its being apparently inspired by the thought of a woman who may some day appear before him, and also because the woman is to be not merely beautiful and virtuous, but intelligent, one capable of

> Sydnæan showers
> Of sweet discourse, whose powers
> Can crown old winter's head with flowers.

It was to a woman, Susan Feilding, the Countess of Denbigh, that he dedicated his sacred "Carmen deo Nostro," in acknowledgment of her goodness and charity. He also thought her worthy of a letter upon delay and irresolution in religion, urging her to become a Catholic, as he then was himself.

The life of Henry Vaughan was very different. He married twice and had six children, and for almost fifty years of his long life practised medicine in one district of Wales. When he writes of Mary Magdalen he at once brings a woman of human stature before the eyes:

> Dear, beauteous Saint! more white than day,
> When in his naked, pure array;
> Fresher than morning-flowers which shew
> As thou in tears dost, best in dew. . .

while Crashaw brings before the mind a basketful of features and qualities which refuse to be integrated. But unhappily we know nothing of his life, nothing of his circumstances while he lived there among the hills, and looking at the rainbow, thought of it as it was in its first arching before the eyes of the patriarchs,

> The youthful world's gray fathers in one knot.

He left some love-poems which perhaps belong in part to the years before his retire-

ment, at the age of about twenty-three, to his native Brecknockshire. He did not sever his mistress from the rest of life, mystic as he was:

> O thou art such, that I could be
> A lover to idolatry!
> I could, and should from heaven stray,
> But that thy life shows mine the way,
> And leave awhile the Deity
> To serve His image here in thee.

When he thought of time at last consuming the grove of oaks which was his retreat, he foresaw them "a fresh grove in th' Elysian land," just as when he and his mistress walked there:

> So there again, thou'lt see us move
> In our first innocence and love;
> And in thy shades, as now, so then,
> We'll kiss, and smile, and walk again.

Such a place was ready to become the "happy harmless solitude" of "faith and hope and holiness." Between this, and his sacred poems and pious thoughts and ejaculations, there seems no unbridged gulf, although he came later to contemn "every big imperious lust which fools admire in sinful dust." But what the change was that put the waterfall's murmurs and the flowers into eternity, and made the rain visibly come from God's hand, we do not know, nor how human love went

side by side with it, nor what part those two women played, while visits daily passed between God and "such poor grass":

> With what sweet looks doth Thy love shine
> On those low violets of Thine,
> While the tall tulip is accurst,
> And Crowns Imperial die with thirst!

Nothing can be said of the influence of women upon this man, certainly one of the greatest of the feminine type of geniuses.

Andrew Marvell is another poet, and a manly poet, of whom it may confidently be said that women had a fair, and not merely decorative, share in his world. One of his finest poems, "The Nymph complaining for the death of her fawn," is that uncommon thing, a poem written from a woman's point of view, and with evident sympathy and tenderness. Passages like—

> Ungentle men! they cannot thrive
> Who killed thee. Thou ne'er didst alive
> Them any harm, alas! nor could
> Thy death yet do them any good . . .

and

> It is a wondrous thing how fleet
> 'Twas on those little silver feet . . .

foretell the day when poetry was to become more conspicuously and regularly feminine.

The poem on "The picture of little T.C. in a prospect of flowers," belongs to the same class, or suggests the manliness that would not be complete without its womanliness also.

But that day was not yet. When Marvell died at the age of fifty-seven, in 1678, poetry had entered an age when it was to reflect less of the influence of women than at any other. It was the age of clubs and coffee-houses, of a purely masculine tone in society and in literature. Even Thomson's "Castle of Indolence" contains no woman, if we except the personification of the "lady proud," Hypochondria, and practically no reference to a woman except in a simile. Poetry was social; men wrote only what they would say and think in the company of other men—only not alas! in the same language. And what is more, the women were upon the same level, and Prior, said Johnson, was "a lady's book"; society and taste were the creation of men alone. This poetry does not lack references to women and to love, but the inexorable convention was that love was a game, a game in which hearts were broken. Too few of the really private letters and conversations of the age have been preserved, but had they been we should perhaps have been entertained again and again by the same

difference between public and private utterance as between Otway's:

> Two things in sweet Retirement much desir'd,
> A generous Bottle and a lovesome She. . .

and the same poet's letters to Mrs. Barry (signed "Weeping Otway," &c.) in this strain:

> I love, I doat, I am mad, and know no measure, nothing but Extremes give me Ease; the kindest Love, or most provoking scorn . . .

and

> Generally with Wine or Conversation I diverted or appeased the Demon that possessed me; but when at Night, returning to my unhappy self, to give my Heart an Account why I had done it so unnatural a Violence, it was then I always paid a treble interest for the short Moments of Ease, which I had borrowed; then every treacherous Thought rose up, and took your part, nor left me till they had thrown me on my Bed, and opened those sluices of Tears, that were to run till morning. . .

This unconvincing style was the penalty which Otway had to pay for the sins of his age. He was not without those sins, but there seems no reason to question the extremity of his passion for Mrs. Barry, an actress who played leading parts in almost all of Otway's plays, and became the Earl of Rochester's mistress. It must have needed courage as well as love to preserve a passion

for the scornful mistress of Rochester, and despair is said to have been Otway's reason for enlisting in the army in 1678 when he was twenty-six. In a society so debauched even had a man been able to write love-poems, he might well have blushed to have it known.

Johnson may have been unjust to Waller when he described him as submitting to the disdain of Lady Dorothea Sidney, his "Sacharissa," and looking about for an easier conquest; but his criticism is just to the majority of poets in the age inaugurated by Waller. It has not been discovered, says Johnson, that his second wife was won by poetry, "nor is anything told of her, but that she brought him many children. He doubtless praised some whom he would have been afraid to marry; and perhaps married one whom he would have been ashamed to praise. Many qualities contribute to domestic happiness, upon which poetry has no colours to bestow; and many airs and sallies may delight imagination, which he who flatters them never can approve. There are charms made only for distant admiration." Sacharissa was about twelve years younger than Waller, and he met her before she was twenty. None of his poems to her retains any trace of passion, if it ever had any.

Waller was a man who could write pretty well on anybody or anything, and he wrote no better on Sacharissa than on Lady Carlisle or the Queen. He wanted to marry Lady Dorothy but was put off, and having no strong inclinations of any kind, or any characteristic subject-matter, he wrote about her. When he wrote his best, as we should have expected, and as Mr. Thorn Drury points out, there is no evidence that Sacharissa was his theme. "Go, lovely rose" and "On a Girdle" are tributes not to her but to the spirit of love and to a combination of circumstances which we have still to call by the name of accident, well knowing that it is nothing of the kind. This, of course, by no means implies that Waller did not know love. Something may be true of him like what was said of Cowley, another poet whose love does not—as his friendship does—ring true, that he was "much in love with his Leonora," who married some one else, "and Cowley never was in love with anybody after."

It was characteristic of the age that its poets wrote love-poetry which could not be supposed to have any cause or aim but a casual kiss, and that its critic should be content to separate poetry from qualities contributing to domestic happiness. Where

true feeling was so much forbidden to poetry, a spurred extravagance of style in praise of slight or simulated feeling was bound to appear, so as to incur the critic's censure, that "the Empire of Beauty is represented as exerting its influence further than can be allowed by the multiplicity of human passions, and the variety of human wants. Such books, therefore, may be considered as showing the world under a false appearance, and, so far as they obtain credit from the young and inexperienced, as misleading expectation and misguiding practice."

Gray wrote hardly any love-poetry, and what he wrote is his worst, if we except his sonnet on the death of Richard West, and that, inspired by a man, is among his finest. This artificial and unemotional poetry is as foreign to us as Chinese, but it has also in its perfection, the charm as well as the disadvantage of foreignness. Time has made some of it a parody of itself, and Prior's "To Chloe Weeping"—

> See, whilst thou weepst, fair Chloe, see
> The world in sympathy with thee——

deceives nobody and can or must be read as laughing with us at itself. As Prior said himself:

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Dorothy Sidney, Countess of Sunderland
"Sacharissa"
(From the Painting by Vandyke)

To be vext by a trifle or two that I writ,
Your judgment at once and my passion you wrong;
You take that for fact which will scarce be found wit:
Od's life! must one swear to the truth of a song?

If taken seriously this poetry is the better the more licentious, and even the more obscene it is, because the license and obscenity are genuine and are also qualities not confined to one age or place. Men of that age wrote as many of our age speak in the absence of women, and for lack of passion or interest in life. Playfulness at least they preserved, and such a poem as "A Lover's Anger" by Prior combines playfulness and truth to nature:

As Chloe came into the room t' other day,
I peevish began; Where so long could you stay?
In your lifetime you never regarded your hour:
You promised at two; and (pray look, child) 'tis four.
A lady's watch needs neither figures nor wheels:
'Tis enough, that 'tis loaded with baubles and seals.
A temper so heedless no mortal can bear—
Thus far I went on with a resolute air.
Lord bless me! said she; let a body but speak:
Here's an ugly hard rosebud fallen into my neck:
It has hurt me, and vexed me to such a degree—
See here; for you never believe me; pray see,
On the left side my breast what a mark it has made.
So saying, her bosom she careless displayed.
That seat of delight I with wonder surveyed;
And forgot every word I designed to have said.

Such was the characteristic "Fair" of the age. She was not adequate, though she was much praised on account of her resemblance to Venus, etc. Swift came to the conclusion that love in his day was not "what those ancient poets sing," and seems to confess that he "had sighed and languished, vowed and writ for pastime or to show his wit." When, therefore, he describes the making of Vanessa who loved him and perhaps won his love—

> But what success Vanessa met
> Is to the world a secret yet—

he gives her not only beauty, but what was

> For manly bosoms chiefly fit,
> The seeds of knowledge, judgment, wit. . .

She was neither coquette nor prude. Her only weakness—or was it Swift's in believing such a thing?—was that she admired Swift's verses. When she made love, "as serious as a tragic player," Swift could scarcely believe but she was rallying him. Only in his "Journal to Stella," and the poems relating to Vanessa (Hester Vanhomrigh) and Stella (Esther Johnson) does Swift show the favourable influence of women. Elsewhere the thought of women only impels him to exceed in the cold, the callous, and the gross in that combination which is Swift's alone.

Swift was not a poet, nor was he a very skilful or brilliant versifier. Nevertheless the best of his verses are those pieces relating to the two women, who could not change his outlook, but compelled him to adopt another one while he was with them. For many years he made it his duty to write a poem for Stella's birthday, March 13, and this occasion puts him into a mood which is lovable or all but lovable. Although he says: "with friendship and esteem possest, I ne'er admitted Love a guest," he pays her ingenious and exuberant compliments, perhaps the greatest being his assertion that Prometheus stole for her "the fire that forms a *manly* soul." When she was past forty and he was past fifty he sent her "a receipt to restore Stella's youth": she must be sent down to Quilca for a country life; then she

> For a blooming nymph will pass,
> Just fifteen, coming summer's grass,
> Your jetty locks with garlands crown'd,
> While all the squires for nine miles round,
> Attended by a brace of curs,
> With jockey boots and silver spurs,
> No less than justices o' quorum,
> Their cow-boys bearing cloaks before 'em,
> Shall leave deciding broken pates,
> To kiss your steps at Quilca gates.

Under the circumstances, this is perhaps the most charming love-poem of the first half

of that century. Her beauty, he knew, was changing, but with the change his eyes were growing dim; he thanked Nature, "always in the right," for this adaptation. He concluded with a wish that Fortune should never make him deaf and mend his sight. That was upon Stella's birthday in 1725. In 1740 he added the note: "Now deaf" to his copy of the "Miscellanies." It is not always that we are thankful to Swift for his truth to Nature, such as it is; but some of the poems to Stella contain plain facts about her which we would not willingly have lost, and are worth the whole of "Baucis and Philemon." Such are those in his picture of her coming to him in a sickness in 1720. He tells how Stella

> My sinking spirit now supplies
> With cordials in her hands and eyes:
> Now with a soft and silent tread
> Unheard she moves about my bed.
> I see her taste each nauseous draught,
> And so obligingly am caught:
> I bless the hand from whence they came,
> Nor dare distort my face for shame. . . .

Most courtly is the fond ingenuity of the birthday poem in 1723, where, "resolved his annual verse to pay," he bites his nails and scratches his head in vain, until, at last, appealing to Apollo, the God directs him to the hiding-place of a great bottle of wine, telling him that upon a deep draught from it

The Muse will at your call appear,
With Stella's praise to crown the year.

In return, Stella thanked him for teaching her the wisdom so few women have, "to please at thirty-six," and blessed him :

O! turn your precepts into laws,
Redeem the women's ruin'd cause,
Retrieve lost empire to our sex,
That men may bow their rebel necks.

The evidence of the poets is insufficient—except to condemn themselves—but it might appear from it that their acquaintance among women included mainly prostitutes and girls who could not attract an intelligent man unless he was in liquor. One of the exceptions is Prior's "Jinny the Just," a poem found among the Longleat MSS. and lately reprinted by the Cambridge University Press. It reminds us that Prior, after spending the evening with men like Oxford, Bolingbroke, Pope, and Swift, would go and smoke a pipe and drink a bottle of ale with a common soldier and his wife in Long Acre before going to bed. This was Bessy Cox, for whom he left money to purchase an annuity; and it was said that he would have married her had her husband not survived him by a little while. She married a cobbler instead. "Jinny the just" was a plain housewife with beauty "rather for use than parade," and—

Her blood so well mixt and flesh so well pasted
That though her youth faded her comeliness lasted;
The blew was wore off but the plum was well tasted.

She "knew better to live than dispute." She worked hard so that "she scarce could have time for the Psalms of the day," and was never finished:

Retire from this Sepulchre all the profane,
You that love for debauch or that marry for gain,
Retire lest ye trouble the Manes of Jane.
But thou that know'st love above interest or lust,
Strew the myrtle and rose on this once belov'd dust,
And shed one pious tear upon Jinny the just.

The soldier's wife, or whatever she was, moved him to what is possibly his best poem, one of the few in which he speaks a language unmistakable and pleasing to all. Yet the same woman was possibly the Chloe of his other poems; for Johnson seems to think Chloe was "one of his wenches" but also "sometimes ideal," while "the woman with whom he cohabited was a despicable drab of the lowest species." In this want of harmony between poetry and life lay his age's principal weakness, in the need it felt either of dressing up and decorating the facts for a public appearance, in too fine a sense of the dignity of literature and too gross a sense of

the dignity of life; or on the other hand the need of disguising the truth in a jaunty rakish manner. Another exceptional poem must also be credited to Prior, his "Henry and Emma" written upon the model of the old "Nut-brown Maid." Nor must Johnson's opinion of this be forgotten: "A dull and tedious dialogue, which excites neither esteem for the man nor tenderness for the woman. The example of Emma, who resolves to follow an outlawed murderer wherever fear and guilt shall drive him, deserves no imitation; and the experiment by which Henry tries the lady's constancy is such as must end either in infamy to her or in disappointment to himself." Finally, it must be put on record of Prior that, in the words of the lady whom he called in her childhood "My noble lovely little Peggy," he was remembered as a man "beloved by every living thing in the house—master, child and servant, human creature or animal." So much was he above his poetry.

Thomson also was weakened by his age in the same way though not to a similar extent, saved as he was by his country Scotch origin and outdoor habits. He also, like Waller, lost his father at an early age and was much under the influence of a tenderly loved mother; and his relations with his sisters

show him in a most amiable light, helping them to set up a milliner's shop in Edinburgh. When about thirty-six he fell in love with a Miss Elizabeth Young whom he addressed and referred to in "The Seasons" as "Amanda." She appears to have returned his love but to have married an Admiral some years later under pressure from an ambitious mother. He told her that she mixed with all his thoughts, "even the most studious," and did not disturb them but gave them "greater harmony and spirit." When, later on, another woman was suggested to him by his friends, he argued unanswerably that he saw and admired all her good qualities and good looks; but—"every man has a singular and uncontrollable imagination of his own" and "she does not pique mine"; and "though a woman had the form and spoke with the tongue of angels, though all divine gifts and graces were hers, yet without striking the fancy she does nothing." He was, he said, too old to marry without feeling "a great flame of imagination." Neither could he write of love, and his love-poems are interesting only because we know that he was a true lover. He never married. It was an age of unmarried poets; Otway, Pope, Swift, Gay, Gray, and Prior were all unmarried.

In the poems where Chatterton used the language of his age, he was the child of his age and in nothing more so than in his treatment of women. He was a posthumous and only surviving son, brought up in a poor small house by his mother and one sister. His mother taught him to read out of a black-letter Bible, thus unconsciously preparing him for his impersonation of the mediæval poet, Rowley, as his biographer, Mr. John H. Ingram, remarks. Both women did the little they could for him, and were devoted to him and afterwards to his memory. In return he was affectionate and generous; as a child he promised them finery if ever he could procure it; and he spent some of his last earnings upon them. But they were not enough for the rapidly developing boy, and he had a numerous acquaintance of mature men, a clergyman, a surgeon, a pewterer and others. It is hinted that the surgeon, Barrett, helped to corrupt the boy with his medical books, but a boy as precocious and independent as Chatterton, who had been at a big boarding-school and afterwards did pretty much as he liked, could learn a great deal without such help. He is said to have told his sister that severe study tended to sour the temper, and that "he had seen all the sex with equal indifference but those that Nature had made

dear"; and he thought of "making an acquaintance with a girl in the neighbourhood, supposing it might soften the austerity of temper study had occasioned." The sister said that "he would frequently walk the College Green with the young girls that statedly paraded there to show their finery," but added that she believed "he was no debauchee." This probably means that he did not disdain familiarity with the flashy daughters of small tradesmen and the like on holidays, some of them less virtuous than others. He himself boasted when he was fifteen that he had been twenty-three times violently in love during a short period, "and not a few times came off victorious"; if there be safety in numbers, this was innocent enough. An old friend gave him this testimonial: "Temperate in his living, moderate in his pleasures, regular in his exercises, he was undeserving of the aspersion"—that he lived a dissipated life. In London they said he was a sad rake. His "Sunday: A Fragment" shows him admiring "each latent charm" of the ladies in church, and he wrote like a very Suckling upon marriage and female virtue. But his precocity and libertinism in words may have been bravado that implied only the novelty and fascination of the subject. On the other

hand he may have told the exact truth in a worthless "Song" when he wrote:

This passion celestial by heaven was designed
The only fixed means of improving the mind;
When it beams on the senses, they quickly display
How great and prolific, how pleasing the ray.

Whatever his habits few of his poems to women bear any clear trace of passion. Some he wrote on behalf of his friend, Baker, to be sent as his own to his sweetheart, Miss Eleanor Hoyland, and it is hardly to be supposed that he would have written on his own behalf in the same tones:

Thou greatest beauty of the sex,
When will the little god perplex
    The mansions of thy breast?
When wilt thou own a flame as pure
As that seraphic souls endure,
    And make thy Baker blest?

"Love, lawless tyrant of my breast" is not in the key of love, and he may have been heart-whole as well as innocent towards the many girls whom he mentions in his London letters to the mother, though this mention does not prove them beyond reproach, since his playfulness in these letters has pretty wide limits, and he may have counted upon his mother's unsuspiciousness. An "Elegy," written only a month or two before his death, is addressed

to a woman unknown in a manner which suggests that love may have had something to do with his end :

Let mercy plead my cause ; and think, Oh ! think !
  A love like mine but ill deserves thy hate :
Remember, I am tottering on the brink,
  Thy smile or censure seals my final fate.

But these words may be worth less than their surface value, and I cannot believe that Chatterton deeply moved would have written thus if he had written at all.

Where there is no appearance or profession of personalities he writes of women and love in a far different tone, in a tone indicated by the words of the Second Minstrel in "Aella" :

Angels be wrought to be of neither kind,
  Angels alone from hot desire be free.
There is a somewhat ever in the mind,
  That, without woman, cannot stillèd be . . .
Albeit, without women, men were peers
  To savage kind, and would but live to slay. . . .

He wrote nothing more beautiful than the third and fourth lines. The passion of Bertha gave his verse a freedom and excitement of movement which it did not often possess. The speech of the woman in his third Eclogue, the woman doomed to work thinking of the jewelled dame buried in the church, comes near to a romantic earthiness and implies a deep sympathy :

How hard is my doom to wurch!
  Much is my woe:
Dame Agnes, who lies in the church
  With birlette gold,
With gilded aumeres, strong, untold,
  What was she more than me, to be so?

In "The Storie of William Canynge" he makes a beautiful picture of a mortal woman, under the pretext of describing Truth:

Like to the silver moon in frosty neet,
The damoisel did come, so blithe and sweet.

Here, with the old words, he has got back into an older tradition of English poetry. The tradition and his own passionate nature together brought forth a beauty beyond the reach of Chatterton or his age alone. When he wrote in the manner of his own age, even when apparently expressing a personal emotion, he wrote no better than his age; in fact, so ill that it is small wonder many refused to believe Rowley and Chatterton one man who were obviously two spirits.

It is one of the chief glories of Burns that he wrote love-poems which every age, and not only his own, must recognise as equally true at once to the spirit of life and to the spirit of poetry. With his songs upon our lips Chloe seems a paper girl, and even Stella but a woman looking out of a picture, an old

picture, on a wall. Except Shakespeare's and Donne's there is hardly a woman of the lyric poets to be compared with Burns', who will stand the sunlight and the breath of life like his. And yet even Burns had his "Chloris" and we must remember the incident of "Clarinda" and "Sylvander." These were the names borne, and self-imposed, by Mrs. M'Lehose and Burns in their sentimental friendship during the Edinburgh visit of 1787. "I like the idea of Arcadian names" wrote Burns, "in a commerce of this kind," that is, a friendship which he was always hoping to develop into a satisfied passion. This was the tune—

> Clarinda, mistress of my soul,
> The measur'd time is run!
> The wretch beneath the dreary pole
> So marks his latest sun.
>
> To what dark cave of frozen night
> Shall poor Sylvander hie,
> Depriv'd of thee, his life and light,
> The sun of all his joy. . . .

We know that it was written while his "bosom" was "interested" in Mrs. M'Lehose, so much interested that he had to explain to her that some mixture of the "delicious passion" was necessary. But she was somewhat above him in social position, and he appears to have tried to write up to her.

As a rule Burns "condescended upon his women," which is Henley's amplification of Gilbert Burns' remark that his brother's love "rarely settled upon those who were richer than himself, or who had more consequence in life." When he was eighteen he was "constantly the victim of some fair enslaver," and he was rhyming but did little good. Until his twenty-third year these loves were "governed by the strictest rules of morality." He wrote to Ellison Begbie with a little contempt for "flames and raptures," but sure that "the nobler faculties of the mind with kindred feelings of the heart can only be the foundation of friendship, and it has always been my opinion that the married life was only friendship in a more exalted degree." At the thought of her—he told her—"every feeling of humanity, every principle of generosity" kindled in his breast. A little later he told a friend that his favourite authors were "of the sentimental kind"; Shenstone, Thomson, "Man of Feeling" Mackenzie, "Ossian" Macpherson, Sterne and others, were "the glorious models" after which he endeavoured to form his conduct. Later still, in 1785, he was telling a young lady of seventeen that "poets, of all mankind, feel most forcibly the powers of beauty"; "the sight of a fine flower, or the company of

a fine woman (by far the finest part of God's works below), has sensations for the poetic heart that the herd of men are strangers to." He shared the reading of Collins with another whose piano and herself "have played the deuce somehow about my heart." But already in 1784 he was the father of a child by Elizabeth Paton, and the author of "A Poet's welcome to his love-begotten daughter; the first instance that entitled him to the venerable appelation of father." The child lived with him and afterwards with his mother, and did not spoil the promise of the spirited welcome—

> Sweet fruit o' monie a merry dint,
> My funny toil is no a' tint:
> Tho' thou cam to the warl' asklent,
> Which fools may scoff at.
> In my last plack thy part's be in 't
> The better half o't.

Mr. W. E. Henley and Mr. Henderson conjecture that "The rantin dog, the daddie o't!" was sent to her while she was "under a cloud" —either to her, or to Jean. He met Jean Armour in the same year, and by 1786 she also was with child. Burns did not wish to marry, but offered to do so, and was consequently shamed by the opposition of her father, a mason, who sent her out of his way; not only shamed, but in his own words "nine parts and nine-tenths, out of ten, stark

staring mad." He ran into "dissipation and riot" to forget her and perhaps found Mary Campbell, his "Highland Mary," during the process. At Edinburgh in 1787 Clarinda was his "ever dearest" and "matchless fair," and he told her of Jean Armour in a manner becoming to Sylvander writing to Clarinda, but not becoming to Burns. The next year he married Jean who had had her fourth child. He wrote "Of a' the airts the wind can blaw" out of compliment to her, during the honeymoon; and he reflected not long afterwards that if he had not got a partner "who could have entered into my favourite studies," etc., he had also missed the expenses, caprices and affectations which "almost universally pervade the misses of the would-be gentry," and further, that "A wife's head is immaterial compared with her heart." He never had to complain of her heart, and when in 1791 she and Anne Park each bore him a child, Jean suckled both. It was not solely for the benefit of the bishop whom he addressed that he spoke as follows of his marriage:

I was sensible that, to so helpless a creature as a poor poet, a wife and family were incumbrances, which a species of prudence would bid him shun; but when the alternative was, being at warfare with myself, on account of habitual follies, to give them

no worse name, . . . I must have been a fool to have hesitated and a madman to have made another choice. Besides, I had in "my Jean" a long and much-loved fellow-creature's happiness or misery among my hands, and who could trifle with such a deposit?

This last phrase pleased him and he repeated it more than once.

What he could not get from Jean he had from Mrs. Dunlop and Mrs. Riddell. Mrs. Dunlop was the "honoured friend," to whom he could write that he would rather send her a letter of true comfort than compose an epic poem equal to the "Iliad"—unbosom himself about his lost, his ever dear Mary "whose bosom was fraught with truth, honour, constancy and love"—and in his last year record that her correspondence and conversation were "at once highly entertaining and instructive." Mrs. Riddell was the handsome and clever wife of Captain Riddell. He wrote "The last time I came o'er the moor" for her in 1793. The next year he forfeited her friendship by giving a friendly imitation, when drunk and in the company of Riddell and others, of the rape of the Sabine women —Burns himself laying hands on Mrs. Riddell. He wrote to apologise, and wrote "amid the horrors of the damned." A year later she renewed the friendship with the

present of a book. She afterwards wrote what Henley thought "the best thing written of him by a contemporary critic." Burns praised her verses and her power of not concealing either her likes or dislikes.

Burns might have said of himself—and said it much better—what Patmore says:

> Whene'er I come where ladies are,
> How sad soever I was before. . . .

He was like a frost-bound ship set free by the "sudden polar spring":

> Out of the North, where life did freeze
> Into the haven where they would be.

He liked women and could not be without one—one present, one past, and one future:

> Great love I bear to a' the fair,
> Their humble slave, an' a' that. . . .

After Maria Riddell had dismissed him he took to a Miss Lorimer, for whom he wrote "Beyond thee, dearie, beyond thee, dearie." The occasion of this particular poem was his friend Gillespie's passion for her. But she ran away and married an Englishman who soon left her. She was his "Chloris," his muse, "mistress or friend, or what you will, in the guileless simplicity of Platonic love," and he compares her with Sterne's Eliza. He tells

Thomson: "To my lovely Friend you are indebted for many of your best songs of mine," and, warming to the subject, says that his recipe for being "more than ordinary in song" is to put himself "in the regimen of admiring a fine woman." And lover as he was, there can be no doubt that Burns wrote best for women whom he could never attain, or even think of attaining, like the "bonie Leslie." As a poet he demanded beauty and adored it, but as a man "kindness, sweet kindness" could be enough. Often he wrote, in the tradition of the old songs and ballads, from the woman's point of view, as in "What can a young lassie do wi' an auld man" and "The bonie lad that's far awa'"; and at other times he wrote for men, for men cheerfully drinking together. Or again, he knew very well the traditional or proverbial attitude towards women. If he had a tyrant wife, he said:

> I'd break her spirit, or I'd break her heart:
> I'd charm her with the magic of a switch,
> I'd kiss her maids and kick the perverse bitch.

There are many other poems like this, where he simply expresses the point of view of a husband of his class and time, as in—

> If ye gie a woman a' her will,
> Guid faith! she'll soon o'ergang ye.

He can write admirably in this traditional vein, as in "Kellyburn Braes" with its proverbial "But ne'er was in Hell till I met wi' a wife"; or in "O, for ane-and-twenty, Tam," where the girl longs for the three years to pass which will set her free of her family:

> And then comes ane-and-twenty, Tam!

In Burns, as in the earlier lyrists of Scotland, and more perfectly, love and a natural rusticity are in complete and most happy accord. The women have an outdoor grace—

> Blythest bird upon the bush
> Had ne'er a lighter heart than she.

They are like the rose of June; they are as fresh as a May morning, as sweet as evening among the new hay, and as blithe and artless as lambs. Only women like these, and men like their lovers from the fields and the hills, could express themselves in words and rhythms so light and so fresh as these, for example:

> Near me, near me,
> Laddie, lie near me!
> Long hae I lain my lane—
> Laddie, lie near me!

It is as near to the music as nonsense could be, and yet it is perfect sense. No other poet praises youth equally well for the cheerful

and active sides of its characteristic virtues. Spirit and body are one in it—so sweet and free is the body and so well satisfied is the spirit to inhabit it. If they are sometimes sorrowful, either they will die quickly of sorrow or they will forget. Few poems are more unlike than these to the literature of "emotion remembered in tranquillity." They seem almost always to be the immediate fruit of a definite and particular occasion. They are not solitary poetry like "I cannot give what men call love," which never was to be spoken except to the unpeopled air. They suggest instantly two persons, the lover, the beloved, one of them speaking or singing in a voice which does not know *ennui* or melancholy, or more than one feeling at any one moment; and the lover and the beloved are young and of good stature, with bright eyes, ruddy skins, and feet that can run and dance. They are a superb expression, with a few variations, of what a man of simple and hearty nature, full of blood, feels at the sight of a woman worthy to awaken his desire. But lover of individual women as Burns was, his poems do not individualise: they call up images only of woman, of youth and of desire.

In the matter of love, Walter Savage Landor was an occasional poet. He wrote graceful compliments and descriptions; he

reached a height once or twice only and that through memory. He is the restrained poet of dalliance, and evidently knew it, because he explained once in prose and once in verse that those who truly love cannot write love-poetry. Browning said of him when he was an old man: "Whatever he may profess the thing he really loves is a pretty girl to talk nonsense with." To the end his "courtly manners towards ladies" made him "chivalry incarnate," and he would offer flowers for a song to the young woman who sang "Kathleen Mavourneen," "Within a Mile of Edinboro' Town" and "Auld Robin Gray," while the tears streamed down his face. When Eliza Lynn, afterwards Mrs. Lynn Linton, had been to see him, he wrote: "What a charm it is even at the close of life to be cared for by the beautiful and gentle, and to see them come out from the warm sunshine and the sweet flowers," a feeling which he has not matched in his poetry. He wrote a poem to the daughter and granddaughter of one of his early loves, and to the niece and grand-niece of another, Rose Aylmer.

He was twenty-one, and she seventeen, when he met Rose Aylmer at Swansea in 1796. They used to walk together to Briton Ferry and along the Tawe. She lent him the book, "The Progress of Romance," which

contained the origin of "Gebir." But in 1800 she went to India and died when still twenty. Her half-sister sent him a lock of Rose Aylmer's hair, and among his things after his death was found a packet, with the inscription "Rose Aylmer's Hair," containing hair "of a light amber tint or . . . sunlit gold, and of a beautiful texture." He twice or thrice recalled her in his verses; once in "Abertawy," a poor poem in a mood probably better suited for prose; and once in the famous "Ah what avails the sceptred race," an exquisite poem where the woman's names are used with most fortunate skill, but possibly also an overpraised poem because its grave manner and lack of sensuous imagery invite a scrutiny which it cannot altogether sustain.

Wales gave him two other mistresses, Ione and Ianthe, or Jones and Jane. Mr. Stephen Wheeler, however, in his "Letters and unpublished writings of Landor," gives some reason for believing that he had met Ione before—a stanza that mentions her belonging to 1793, his first year at Oxford:

> "Tell me what means that sigh," love said,
> When on her shoulder I reclined my head;
> And I could only tell her that it meant
> The sigh that swells the bosom with content.

Nothing is known of the charming Jones,

except that she probably gave way to Ianthe (Sophia Jane Swift). The verses he had once written for Neæra he now offered to Ianthe, after a change of only the name, and he submitted to her caprice the choice of poems for his "Simonidea" of 1806. A year before this his father died and Landor was a rich man, and of the next five or six years he spent much in frivolous living at Bath, Clifton, and elsewhere. "His flirtations," writes Mr. Sidney Colvin, "were numerous and were carried far. There is even not wanting, in his dealings with and his language concerning women during this brief period, a touch of commonplace rakishness, a shadow of vulgarity nowhere else to be discerned in the ways of this most unvulgar of mankind." His eldest, but slightly younger sister, Elizabeth, warned him against any ill-advised marriage, saying: "Birth and good fortune are not requisites, but good disposition and a good understanding are; and how many innocents, only for being pretty, have you all your life been thinking sensible." When he was thirty-six, nevertheless, he married the pretty woman Julia Thuillier, sixteen years younger than himself, who soon turned out to be "agreeable—to every one but *me*." Nearly forty years later he was praising a girl whose curled gold hair fell to her waist, say-

ing it was "the most wonderfully beautiful golden hair he had seen since his wife's"; he bragged that he had married her mainly for her hair and because she had neither money nor accomplishments; and he recalled that if he had waited a year he might have married Ianthe whose husband then died. Mrs. Landor is said to have interrupted the poet's reading of his own verses during the honeymoon to look at a Punch and Judy show; she bore him some children, but he spent more and more of his life apart and far distant from them all. When he was an old man he repeated the lines of Milton about Eve the bride:

> Yielded with coy submission, modest pride,
> And sweet, reluctant, amorous delay,

and said that he would rather have written them than all the poetry written since Milton's time.

Almost twenty years after his marriage Ianthe, now for the second time widowed as Madame de Molandé, met Landor at Florence, and they remained upon terms of polite and affectionate friendship until her death in 1851; "tender, respectful, playful, with his old-world courtesy," wrote the admiring Mrs. Linton, with her he was at his best, and her grandchildren were dearest to him of all

children. It pleased him that she should plant four mimosa trees round the place marked in his own garden at Fiesole for his grave, nor did he shrink from composing the epitaph:

> Lo! where the four mimosas blend their shade
> In calm repose at last is Landor laid;
> For ere he slept he saw them planted here
> By her his soul had ever held most dear.

He hoped she might see his grave. But she died before him, and he was not buried between the mimosas.

Landor, like Waller, had the secret of writing about those whom he professed to care for very much, as if he cared for them but little. He seems most genuine when he is only gallant. When he thought the *Countess* was about to marry a *Duke*, he seriously addressed to her the lines:

> . . . Go, and go happy, light of my past days,
> Consoler of my present! thou whom Fate
> Alone could sever from me! one step higher
> Must yet be mounted, high as was the last:
> Friendship with faltering accent says "Depart,
> And take the highest seat below the crown'd."

The best he wrote upon her was the compliment:

> I wonder not that Youth remains
> With you, wherever else she flies:
> Where could she find such fair domains,
> Where bask beneath such sunny eyes?

No man in the nineteenth century wrote so many marmoreal nothings about love, poems apparently born dead, so completely without a breath are they to-day. "Remembered loves make Byron's self sincere," wrote Landor himself, but though they made Landor also sincere, they produced only "Rose Aylmer." By abstraction he becomes marmoreal; by approaching very near to reality he gains warmth, but comes also too often to a point where prose seems to be necessary; as, for example, in the charming "Here, where precipitate spring," which describes a girl on tip-toe for orange-blossoms, but in vain until he bent down a branch and gathered some, and at last she held one forth:

Whether for me to look at or to take
She knew not, nor did I; but taking it
Would best have solved (and this she felt) her doubt.
I dared not touch it; for it seemed a part
Of her own self; fresh, full, the most mature
Of blossoms, yet a blossom; with a touch
To fall, and yet unfallen. She drew back
The boon she tender'd, and then, finding not
The ribbon at her waist to fix it in,
Dropt it, as loth to drop it, on the rest.

A very large number of these occasional poems have now ceased to be intelligible. Not all his artifices can hide the spirit perhaps essentially Landor's, the spirit of—

Come, Sleep! but mind ye! if you come without
The little girl that struck me at the rout,
By Jove! I would not give you half-a-crown
For all your poppy-heads and all your down.

Once he addresses love as "perfidious boy," and I feel that if only he had used the deliberate systematic artifice of the eighteenth century, his cold frivolity and lofty dalliance would be more effectual, and his playfulness from a "gentleman of thirty-two" would be still better if turned by Prior. It explains nothing, but his defect was one of style; he wrote in two dead languages. He was self-centred enough to have made a great lyric poet, but this defect prevented him from doing more than make himself a pathetic object—sending a lady the last flowers which she "may ever from his hand receive";—or telling one whose portrait he received that if only he could hold her hand "to the last clasp," he would die and leave "but one man happier here below";—or having mimosas planted round his intended grave by his twice-married Countess and possible Duchess, thirty or forty years before he died; best of all, because most graceful and insincere, writing to one of his "three Roses":

If by my death I win a tear,
O Rose, why should I linger here?
If my departure cost you two,
Alas! I shall be loth to go.

In his own time some one accused him of not feeling deeply and so not piercing the passive world with his pen, and he ingeniously but disingenuously replies with the usual poet's pretext—"While the heart bleeds, the hand presses it close," and therefore cannot use a pen. Some deficiency there must have been to set against his being the most genuinely polite man in Europe, unless that in itself was a great enough deficiency. It is very probable that he liked stupid and easy women best. He fell naturally into a patronising tone towards women when he was not flattering, and in his "Imaginary Conversations" he knows nothing between the lofty exalted womanliness which he might have borrowed from literature, and the kittenish vacuity which looks as if it might be what he was used to in living women. I cannot agree with Mr. Colvin's implication when he says that if Landor "was inclined to trifle with the most serious of things, love, that is a fault by which the quality of a man's life suffers, but not necessarily the quality of his song; and experiences both more transient and more reckless than his have made of a Burns or Heine the exponents of the passions for all generations." There is as little resemblance between the lives, as between the poetry, of Landor and Burns.

Landor was apparently a wealthy and gentlemanly trifler, and in being so he differed more from Burns than from the Puritan, and far more than from the man about town. To Landor "love" was a luxury which became a comfort and necessity. What it was to Burns is not so easy to say because Burns was all youth and genius, and an altogether rarer phenomenon; it was inseparable from his genius and youth, and from his life; all of him burnt like a flame in a caress and in a song; and his conduct is not to be taken apart and judged by those who have leisure for it, as Landor's may be. What Landor thought of himself in the matter he shows in a letter to Browning. His imagination, like his heart, has always been with the women, "I mean the young," he adds, "for I cannot separate that adjective from that substantive," and he goes on to say that his women raise Shakespeare to his "immeasurable superiority."

Byron is nearer to Landor than Heine or Burns, but still far enough away. They are alike chiefly in their worldly position and the way they took advantage of it; but Byron, though he could stoop to Claire Clairmont and then treat her, the mother of his child, with studied frigidity for years, could yet abandon himself to his passion with a frank-

ness which has its admirable side; nothing of the kind is recorded of Landor. Byron began to have decided inclinations for particular girls when he was eight or nine, and was but fifteen when he fell in love with Mary Anne Chaworth, his fourth cousin. She was then seventeen and already engaged to John Musters, whom she married, in spite of an affection for Byron, two years later, in 1805. The one or at least the ruling passion in Byron's early poems was this for Mary Chaworth; but those relating to her were apparently not written until after her marriage, when his attachment was hopeless. Even at that early date he said practically what he said fifteen or sixteen years later, that had he married her, perhaps the whole tenor of his life would have been different: in verses published in 1807 he wrote:

> If thou wert mine, had all been hush'd:—
> This cheek, now pale from early riot,
> With Passion's hectic ne'er had flush'd,
> But bloom'd in calm domestic quiet.

He also says distinctly:

> Ah! since thy angel form is gone,
> My heart no more can rest with any;
> But what it sought in thee alone,
> Attempts, alas! to find in many.

So, "Childe Harold" "had sighed to many

though he loved but one, and that loved one, alas! could ne'er be his."

Mr. Richard Edgcumbe in his "Byron: the Last Phase" has given some good reasons for believing that Mary Chaworth is the Thyrza of the poems "To Thyrza" and of "Childe Harold," II, 9, though "whose Love and Life together fled" is not obviously applicable to her. Mr. Edgcumbe shows that Mary was parted from her husband in 1813. In January 1814, Byron introduced Mary to his sister, Augusta Leigh, and in April was born Medora, apparently the child of Mary and Byron. There is some probability that Byron consented to a separation from his wife in 1816 "in order to shield Mary from the possible consequences of a public investigation into her conduct prior to his marriage"; and that it was to shelter Mary, in obedience to a compact with Byron, and to make sure that Byron's fortune should come to her own children, that Mrs. Leigh kept silence before the insinuations against her—that Medora was her own child.

Byron certainly did not lose all his power of whole-hearted affection when Mary Chaworth was married. Edleston, a Cambridge chorister, he loved "more than any human being"; he compared him and himself with Pylades and Orestes, and said

they met every day at Cambridge without "one tiresome moment"; and it has been conjectured that the poems "To Thyrza" were inspired by his death. But his half-sister, Augusta, who was five years older than himself, was the one person whom he loved with complete intimacy and lack of affectation. In "Stanzas to Augusta," one of those entirely personal and all but private poems so characteristic of modern poetry, he said:

> When Fortune changed—and Love fled far,
> And Hatred's shafts flew thick and fast,
> Thou wert the solitary star
> Which rose and set not to the last. . . .

Of her, he said: "There's more in one soft word of thine than in the world's defied rebuke," and "The Love which my Spirit hath painted it never hath found but in *Thee*"; he thought they were "Beings who ne'er each other can resign." For her he kept his admirable Alpine journal in 1816.

Byron married in 1815 a clever and pretty heiress, Miss Anna Isabella Milbanke. He thought, like Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and George Meredith, that men and women should marry on lease, but soon after his own marriage he also thought he would renew his own lease "though the next term

were for ninety-and-nine years"; and before, he had said "She is so good a person that—that—in short I wish I was a better." His disagreement with Lady Byron and early separation was one of the principal influences on his life, as it gave him a continual grievance, helped to exile him, and ripened his conception of himself as a tragic figure upon the canvas of Europe. As late as 1820 he wrote the following verses after seeing Lady Byron announced as patroness at a Charity Ball:

What matter the pangs of a husband and father,
If his sorrows in exile be great or be small,
So the Pharisee's glories around her she gather,
And the Saint patronises her "Charity Ball."

What matters—a heart which, though faulty, was feeling
Bedriven to excesses which once could appal—
That the Sinner should suffer is only fair dealing,
As the Saint keeps her charity back for "the Ball"!

He wrote nothing for her, as for Mary Chaworth, until she was out of his reach.

Before he married her—and he won her with difficulty and a certain sense of triumph—many women had thrown themselves at the author of "Childe Harold" and had been accepted with brief but mutual gratitude. Such was Lady Caroline Lamb, wife of

William Lamb, the "Ariel" with hazel eyes and golden hair, who went to his rooms disguised as a page when he had had enough of her; such were Lord Oxford's wife, aged forty, with whom he thought of leaving England, and Lady Frances Wedderburn Webster, to whom he wrote two indifferent sonnets as "Genevra" and, as Mr. E. H. Coleridge thinks, the lines "Remember him, when Passion's power." There were also the "Paphian Girls" of the Newstead Abbey orgies celebrated in "Childe Harold," and others, like the three young "Maids of Athens," whom he courted in vain, in vain although he gashed his breast with a dagger after the Greek fashion. He always meant "to pull up and marry, if any one will have me." After he had left Lady Byron there were no more noble English ladies for him. Claire Clairmont came to him soon after the separation. Later in 1816 Venice gave him Marianna Segati, his landlord's wife, a very loose dark-eyed woman with a beautiful voice and the power of convincing Byron that she was his and only his. In 1818 followed a baker's wife, Margarita Cogni, who was for some time his housekeeper: with her "large black eyes and face like Faustina's, and the figure of a Juno —tall and energetic as a Pythoness, with eyes flashing and her dark hair streaming

in the moonlight" she was a woman after Byron's own heart, one of his own heroines, a kind of Medea, a creature who would plunge a poniard wherever he told her, and into himself if he offended her. The Countess Guiccioli, the young wife of an old man, fell in love with him in 1819 and during most of the following years they lived together. The worst thing about this satisfactory union was that Byron advised her, and she consented, to return to her husband for a short time at his request. She was lovely, clever, and admiring. For her he wrote "The Prophecy of Dante" with a sonnet of dedication, and for her he promised, but without fulfilment, to make the continuation of "Don Juan" more "guarded and decorous and sentimental" than the opening. Soon after their meeting Byron wrote: "It is my *last* love. As to libertinism, I have sickened myself of that, as was natural in the way I went on, and I have at least derived that advantage from vice, to *love* in the better sense of the word." At one time he spoke of changing his name and retiring with her to France or America. It became a matter-of-fact attachment, with "neither the blindness of the beginning, nor the microscopic accuracy of the close to such *liaisons*," though her tears could prevent

him from going to Greece with her brother in 1821. Byron's servant said of him: "It is very odd, but I never yet knew a lady that could not manage my lord, *except* my lady." At the end of his life, it was his opinion that love was "a sort of hostile transaction, very necessary to make or to break matches, and keep the world going, but by no means a sinecure to the parties concerned"; that lovers never can be friends, and (thinking possibly of Augusta)—

> No friend like to a woman Earth discovers,
> So that you have not been nor will be lovers.

When he was eighteen Byron courted not the "cold compositions of art" but "the effusions that spring from the heart," and ever after he lived in verse, and his poetry was a direct product of his life, piece by piece. No other English poet has equalled him, for example, in work like the "Epistle to Augusta" and "There's not a joy," of a style so substantial and closely related to the actual that by some it might be said to resemble prose, if prose could ever be proved capable of such massive brevity. He said himself that the fruits of successful Passion were "Youth wasted—Minds degraded—Honour lost," and perhaps his great unsuccessful passion was the salt of his

too easy life. The first fine lines that he wrote, when he was twenty, were those to Mary Chaworth beginning:

> Well! thou art happy, and I feel
> That I should thus be happy too. . . .

It is upon the plane of every day in all but expression, onwards from

> Thy husband's blest—and 'twill impart
> Some pangs to view his happier lot:
> But let them pass—Oh! how my heart
> Would hate him if he lov'd thee not!

And again and again, as in "The Dream" of 1816, he returned to this experience and always with the same passionate if calm solemnity. Well might he ask:

> Think you, if Laura had been Petrarch's wife,
> He would have written sonnets all his life?

And it is remarkable how Byron retained his tenderness through all his crude vice, the tenderness of the love scene between Juan and Haidée—the lady watching her lover, and the poet himself reflecting that "Man, to man so oft unjust, is always so to Women." Nor did he lose the power of taking flights, though they were short, into the empyrean, in the strain of "Clarens! sweet Clarens, birthplace of deep Love"

when he was thinking of Rousseau and in the presence of the mountains. But it was always easier and better for him to follow the method of the very early "Remind me not, remind me not." This also belongs to 1808, and it must be quoted to illustrate further what appears to be Byron's almost literal use of experience:

> . . . Can I forget—canst thou forget,
> When playing with thy golden hair,
> How quick thy fluttering heart did move?
> Oh! by my soul, I see thee yet,
> With eyes so languid, breast so fair,
> And lips, though silent, breathing love.
>
> When thus reclining on my breast,
> Those eyes threw back a glance so sweet,
> As half reproach'd yet rais'd desire,
> And still we near and nearer prest,
> And still our glowing lips would meet,
> As if in kisses to expire.
>
> And then those pensive eyes would close,
> And bid their lids each other seek,
> Veiling the azure orbs below;
> While their long lashes' darken'd gloss
> Seem'd stealing o'er thy brilliant cheek,
> Like raven's plumage smooth'd on snow.

Prose could hardly be more close to the facts, or, if it could, it would not be. When he has described Zuleika in "The Bride of Abydos"—

> The light of Love, the purity of Grace,
> The mind, the Music breathing from her face . . .

he requests the reader to recollect the features of "the woman whom he believes to be the most beautiful" and confidently expects his agreement with the phrase. Some, at least, would have understood it had they seen the face he has in his mind; "for," he adds, "this passage is not drawn from imagination but memory, that mirror which Affliction dashes to the earth, and looking down upon the fragments, only beholds the reflection multiplied!" Even "She walks in beauty" was inspired by a particular woman, Anne Beatrix Horton. Knowing this inability of Byron to keep his life out of his poetry it is small wonder that "Manfred" has been used to support the story of Byron's love for Augusta Leigh. Another curious instance of Byron's use of his own experience and his interest in beauty is the note to "Don Juan," where he describes Haidée's hair flowing in "long auburn waves down to her heel," abundant enough to "conceal her person if allowed at large to run." The note relates that he remembers four women with hair in this profusion, three English and one Levantine; only one had dark hair, and the Levantine's was "perhaps the lightest colour of the four."

A description, presumably of Margarita Cogni, has already been quoted; and so like

it is the fine picture of Myrrha in "Sardanapalus," that it must have been the original. Myrrha, the Greek mistress of Sardanapalus, is the noblest figure of a woman in Byron's poetry. She has a heart "that loves without self-love," she is one who will "dare all things except survive what I have loved." When Sardanapalus mounts the pyre, she goes with him, asking:

> And dost thou think
> A Greek girl dare not do for love, that which
> An Indian widow braves for custom?

Such are the women he most delights to depict—like the "wildly beautiful" Spanish maids with daggers in their sashes, fit for patriotic battle as well as love; or like Gulbeyaz in a fury, "a beautiful embodied storm," women equal to the lover in "The Giaour":

> The cold in clime are cold in blood,
> Their love can scarce deserve the name;
> But mine was like the lava flood
> That boils in Ætna's breast of flame. . . .

No other poet has drawn physical women with such exactness from eyelashes to ankles, and yet remained a poet, as Byron. He describes them a little too much—at least in "Don Juan"—after the manner of a

connoisseur; but it was an always enthusiastic connoisseur. The short upper lip of Haidée, as he thought of it, probably did make him sigh "ever to have seen such." He explains himself when he continues:

She was one
Fit for the model of a statuary
(A race of mere impostors, when all's done—
I've seen much finer women, ripe and real,
Than all the nonsense of their stone ideal).

I'll tell you why I say so, for 't is just
One should not rail without a decent cause:
There was an Irish lady, to whose bust
I ne'er saw justice done, and yet she was
A frequent model; and if e'er she must
Yield to stern Time and Nature's wrinkling laws,
They will destroy a face which mortal thought
Ne'er compassed, nor less mortal chisel wrought.

It was part of Byron's great power, not, as so many poets have done, to create a world of their own not subject to earthly laws, but to keep his verse always in touch with the actual world of his own time, to allow the circulation of blood between his poetry and his world of flesh, shone upon by the very sun and blown across by the living winds. Even Burns has this actuality only at times.

Mr. Arthur Symons, in his "Romantic Movement in English Poetry," has made

ridiculous if he has not destroyed the belief that Keats was an impersonal poet. In no matter did he reveal himself more carelessly than in his feeling towards women. He was interested in women and in his attitude towards them. Towards two women only did he feel always the same, towards his young sister at school, whom he loved tenderly without condescension, and his sister-in-law Georgiana, the "most disinterested woman" he ever knew, to whom he wrote perhaps the happiest and most friendly of all his letters, full of respect and void of ceremony. But for his letters to these two and to his brothers, it would not be easy to detect the homely side of Keats in the spate of youth. When he was turned twenty he thought as much about women as most young men with a strong vein of sensuality and sensuousness. He professed to like "the idea of the women being a little profligate" at the Isle of Wight, when he saw the words "O Isle spoilt by the Milatary" on the window of his room at Newport. There is a great gusto in his five verses to the tune of

There's a blush for won't, and a blush for sha'n't,
And a blush for having done it:
There's a blush for thought and a blush for nought,
And a blush for just begun it.

Yet it is characteristic of Keats to end the letter beginning with this song, by copying out "When I have fears that I may cease to be." He is continually veering between "Why don't you, as I do, look unconcerned at what may be called more particularly Heart-vexations? They never surprise me—lord! a man should have the fine point of his soul taken off to become fit for this world," which was his advice to Reynolds—and what he said a year later about Burns: "How sad it is when a luxurious imagination is obliged, in self-defence, to deaden its delicacy in vulgarity and things attainable." At this same moment he is certain of nothing but "the holiness of the Heart's affections and the truth of imagination." The difference is due partly to uncertainty and partly to inexperience: when he recommended taking off the "fine point" he had not considered the case of Burns. He was in the company of young men who "call good wine a pretty tipple, and call getting a child knocking out an apple;" and yet to one of them who was about to be married he wrote that his sensations were sometimes deadened for weeks together, but that he yearned for his friend's happiness sometimes as much as he could after "the lips of Juliet": the continuation is significant; his "rhodomontade in chit-chat" might have deceived his friend

on these points, but he has been getting more and more close to him, "and now one of the first pleasures I look to is your happy Marriage —the more since I have felt the pleasure of loving a sister-in-law." He adds that things like these have made him resolved to be careful of his health. Nevertheless, he remained in a turbid fever. He had not "a right feeling towards women" he confessed, perhaps because they fell far beneath his boyish imagination. When he was a schoolboy he thought "a fair woman a pure Goddess;" but now when among women he has "evil thoughts, malice, spleen"; he cannot speak or be silent, is full of suspicions and in a hurry to be gone. Nevertheless, he has not the least idea that men who think differently are more short-sighted in their view of women; he must wait for a change in himself, and meantime "I do think better of womankind than to suppose they care whether Mister John Keats five feet high likes them or not." These uncomfortable fluctuations were perhaps among the penalties for his trifling, like Chatterton's, with girls of various conditions, and for the, at any rate superficial, debauching of his mind. A little later he tells his brother Thomas that he thinks he will be able to conquer his passions hereafter better than he has done. Both

letters were written from the Highlands where he had gone partly to get experience, rub off prejudice, and use himself to hardship. A little later the voice and shape of a woman had haunted him two days, yet he "never was in love." The relief was poetry; he relapsed into those abstractions which were his only life. He compared the same woman to a tune of Mozart's; he was not in love with her. This was Jane Cox, a Charmian if not a Cleopatra, with a "rich eastern look," fine eyes and fine manners, and when she came into the room she made "an impression the same as the Beauty of a Leopardess." He went on:

> She is a fine thing speaking in a worldly way: for there are two distinct tempers of mind in which we judge of things—the worldly, theatrical and pantomimical; and the unearthly, spiritual and ethereal—in the former Buonaparte, Lord Byron and this Charmian hold the first place in our minds; in the latter, John Howard, Bishop Hooker rocking his child's cradle, and you my dear sister [Georgiana Keats, his sister-in-law] are the conquering feelings. As a Man in the World I love the rich talk of a Charmian; as an eternal Being I love the thought of you. I should like her to ruin me, and I should like you to save me. Do not think my dear Brother from this that my Passions are headlong or likely to be ever of any pain to you—
>
> "I am free from Men and Pleasure's cares,
> By dint of feelings far more deep than theirs."

In this same long letter he describes an adventure with a woman whom he had met twice before, by passing her in the street, turning round at once and so joining her, and at last arriving at her rooms in 34 Gloucester Street, Queen Square, "a very tasty sort of place with Books, Pictures, a bronze Statue of Buonaparte, Music, Æolian Harp; a Parrot, a Linnet, a case of choice Liqueurs, etc." As he had "warmed with her," and kissed her before, he thought it would be "living backwards" not to do so again. But she put him off though not prudishly, in fact so as to give him more pleasure than a kiss. He had "no libidinous thought about her," she and Georgiana Keats being the only women of his own age whom he would be content to know for their "mind and friendship alone." But he hopes he will never marry, because "the mighty abstract idea I have of Beauty in all things stifles the more divided and domestic happiness—an amiable wife and sweet children I contemplate as a part of that Beauty, but I must have a thousand of those beautiful particles to fill up my heart." And here again he repeated his opinion of the generality of women; they appear to him "as children to whom I would rather give a sugar-plum than my time." This doubtless is that appearance of heartlessness which he put

down to abstraction, to the "mighty abstract Idea I have of beauty in all things," which made him say that sometimes he felt not the influence of a passion or affection for a whole week—"and so long this sometimes continues, I begin to suspect myself, and the genuineness of my feelings at other times—thinking them a few barren Tragedy tears."

Fanny Brawne probably made no difference to this power of abstraction, though from time to time she kept it in abeyance. It was when he had known her for two years, and not long before his death, that he perceived his tendency "to class women with roses and sweetmeats" in his books. He met Fanny Brawne soon after the "Charmian," and he was at first more critical of her. "She is about my height—with a fine style of countenance of the lengthened sort—she wants sentiment in every feature—she manages to make her hair look well . . . her arms are good, her hands badish" and so on. Her behaviour was monstrous, and he was "forced lately to make use of the term Minx." She was not nineteen: Keats was twenty-three. Later, about the time he was writing "St. Agnes' Eve" and "Isabella," he and she had "every now and then a chat and a tiff," and during that spring of 1819 he wrote "On Indolence," "Bards of Passion and of Mirth," "To

Psyche," "On a Grecian Urn," and "To a Nightingale." By July he was utterly in love, the pain of love being equal to the pain he had hitherto known through the death or sickness of others. "I almost wish we were butterflies" he told her, "and lived but three summer days—three such days with you I could fill with more delight than fifty common years could ever contain." He insists much upon her beauty "since without that I could never have lov'd you." He was now working at "Otho the Great" and "Lamia." Even when he was not thinking of her he received her influence and a tenderer nature stealing upon him. She absorbed him and, looking forward, he even confessed himself willing for her sake to meet domestic cares. His two luxuries of thought were her loveliness and the hour of his death, and now as in his last sonnet he wished he could have both together; he would take a sweet poison from her lips to send him out of the hated world. His jealousy was very great, and he did not like any one to look at her or speak to her. Her love for him seems to have been no more than the reflection of some of his for her, and that was hot as Ludolph's for Auranthe in "Otho the Great"—

> Now I follow thee
> A substance or a shadow, wheresoe'er

Thou leadest me,—whether thy white feet press,
With pleasant weight, the amorous-aching earth,
Or thro' the air thou pioneerest me,
A shade!

Love and poetry were together in his mind. He was writing "Lamia" and "Hyperion," and for a time there was a contest between love and poetry. He was "in the fever" for writing; he wanted two months more at it in August 1819, and he begged his mistress to forgive him for being no more able to use soothing words than if he were in a charge of cavalry; he was afraid that a few more moments' thinking of her would "uncrystallize and dissolve" him. A month later he was still weaning himself from her, and just able to maintain the fine balance of his mind; he was writing "To Autumn" at this time. He concealed the conflict from others; some did not even know that he was in love with Miss Brawne; and he could write in that same September to his brother, "Nothing strikes me so forcibly with a sense of the ridiculous as love. A man in love I do think cuts the sorriest figure in the world." A month later, in mid-October, he was copying out some verses without "any degree of content," so he wrote to her to "see if that will assist in dismissing" her from his mind. He had, he said, been

astonished that men could be martyred for religion: now he knew that he could be martyred for his religion which was Love. He grew ill; he was living near her and more jealous than ever; he was thinking of how illness was a barrier between them, and also that if he should die he had left no immortal work behind him. He wished her to see how unhappy he was for love of her; not to think of anything but him. When she tended him, the excitement was more than he could bear; the air he breathed in a room without her was unhealthy. He was abandoned to his love; "Be serious!" he cried, "Love is not a plaything—and again do not write unless you can do it with a crystal conscience." Even the past was now poisoned by his love: the last two years tasted "like brass" on his palate. He set sail for Italy, and off the Isle of Wight he told his friend Brown that even if his body would recover "of itself" his love would prevent it. "You think" he wrote, "that she has many faults—but, for my sake, think she has not one!" He seldom thought now of his brother and sister, but eternally saw Miss Brawne "eternally vanishing." At Naples the silk lining she put in his travelling cap "scalds my head." At Rome he wrote: "There is one thought enough to kill me; I have been

vell, healthy, alert, etc., walking with her, ınd now—the knowledge of contrast, feeling 'or light and shade, all that information primitive sense [of the word]) necessary for ı poem, are great enemies to the recovery of he stomach." But he did not write poetry, ınd after a few months of "posthumous life" ›n a sick-bed he died.

Keats' poetry echoes the changes of his eelings towards women, and as most of it vas written before his meeting with Fanny Brawne it belongs to the time of his "old iberty"—

> When every fair one that I saw was fair
> Enough to catch me in but half a snare,
> Nor keep me there.

A shallow sensuality is prominent in some ›f the earliest poems, as in—

> Light feet, dark violet eyes, and parted hair;
> Soft dimpled hands, white neck and creamy breast,

›r in—

> Happy is England, sweet her artless daughters;
> Enough their simple loveliness for me,
> Enough their whitest arms in silence clinging . . .

r, with the addition of emotion, in the verse o Cupid in "Endymion"—

> God of warm pulses, and dishevell'd hair,
> And panting bosoms bare!

At the same time the frankness is exceptional, and few modern poems but Rossetti's "Jenny" can be found of the same kind as the lines of 1817 beginning:

> Unfelt, unheard, unseen,
> I've left my little queen,
> Her languid arms in silver slumber lying. . .

A poem which is like Donne's "The sun rising." But too often he degrades the objects of his desire by a perhaps rather unreal, purely physical treatment, as in—

> Small good to one who had by Mulla's stream,
> Fondled the maidens with the breasts of cream.

Where "breasts of cream" is as mean an expression as "a pat of butter." He so easily makes a woman into an attractive lower animal, as where he describes one "sweet as a musk rose upon new-made hay, with all her limbs on tremble, and her eyes shut softly up alive." He certainly had shown the tendency he spoke of, "to class women with roses and sweetmeats." It was natural to him; it is natural to a great many others; and he has expressed it with vivid truth: but it is too often trivial in phrases like "a lovely wreath of girls dancing their sleek hair into tangled curls," or "a paradise of lips and eyes, blush-tinted cheeks, half

smiles and faintest sighs," where the offence is to treat as dead matter what is alive and also half spiritual even to the sensual eye.

This too easy voluptuousness produces or usually accompanies a limp febrility. He and his heroes tend to go into a trance or swoon of sensuality, and it is no wonder when they have a "soft luxury" nestling in their arms, when they think of "nymphs wiping cherishingly Diana's timorous limbs," and water running "in amorous rillets down her shrinking form" and "love panting in safe alarm." In his last sonnet, where he longs to be as steadfast as the bright star, it is to be lying upon his "fair love's ripening breast" for ever,

> And so live ever—or else swoon to death.

The alternative reading—

> Half-passionless, and so swoon on to death

makes it more languid still. Even so his Endymion "sigh'd to faint once more by looking on my bliss." Languor is a favourite mood in his poetry, and with it goes indolence and deliciousness and trembling, as, for example, in:

Thus spake he, and that moment felt endued
With power to dream deliciously; so wound
Through a dim passage, searching till he found
The smoothest mossy bed and deepest, where
He threw himself, and just into the air
Stretching his indolent arms, he took, O bliss!
A naked waist: "Fair Cupid, whence is this?"
A well-known voice sigh'd, "Sweetest, here am I!"
At which soft ravishment, with doting cry
They trembled to each other. . .

It is to be felt where Endymion compares his sister with "a dove trembling its closed eyes and sleeked wings about me." But the most perfect instance is at the end of "To Fancy," where Hebe's kirtle falls down to her feet as she holds the goblet for Jove, and at the sight of her white waist and side, "Jove grew languid."

What the poet expresses on behalf of his characters in other poems he expresses also in those written in his own person, in the earliest and the latest. The few to Fanny Brawne have this physical voluptuousness and languor. He bids her put her hand to her heart in this way:

> Put your soft hand upon your snowy side,
> Where the heart beats.

His eyes gazing upon her are "ravish'd, aching, vassal eyes, lost in soft amaze." Even so Porphyrio's "soul doth ache" beside Made-

line's bed; and again in the lines written to Fanny in October 1819 he begs her to "let once again these aching arms be placed, the tender gaolers of thy waist"; and he is to rest his "soul" upon "that dazzling breast." One of his sonnets recording a meeting with Fanny begins:

The day is gone and all its sweets are gone!
  Sweet voice, sweet lips, soft hand, and softer breast,
Warm breath, light whisper, tender semi-tone,
  Bright eyes, accomplish'd shape, and lang'rous waist!

In another he cries to her to give him all of herself, her "soul," but emphasises "that warm, white, lucent, million-pleasured breast." In all this there is nothing remarkable except that it is to be found written down plainly by an English poet.

"Filthy" Prior is almost modest, superficially, compared with this man. Keats has all the immodesty of young love unsuspicious of eavesdroppers. He thinks of the body, and of nothing behind or beyond it, except that he desires it to last for ever. No other English poet has so frankly owned the physical side of love and courtship, the physical side of light casual love achieved or not, and also of complete devotion to one woman who would in the natural course of things become his

wife, as in the case of Keats himself, and of his lovers, Lorenzo and Porphyrio.

To express this was perhaps the daring of real innocence, which is entirely different from the modesty of the libertine. Byron can be gross enough when humorous, but in passion he is decorous. Keats consciously preferred this openness. He told Miss Brawne that he preferred the "common gossip of washer-women" to the "continual and eternal fence and attack of Rousseau and these sublime Petticoats" in "La Nouvelle Heloise"; and he thanked God she was fair and could love him without being "letter-written and sentimentaliz'd into it." Part of his uneasiness with women and his poor opinion of them may have been due to the necessity for indirectness and ceremony in their company. He would not be "a pet-lamb in a sentimental farce"; he hated love as a doll "for idleness to cosset, nurse and dandle." He preferred the country strain of "Where be you going, you Devon Maid?" To the end, though he could make poetry of the grief of Isabella, he treated women as accessories, saving only "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," and she is supernatural. In his own life most likely they had been accessories. There is reason for concluding that he knew chiefly an inferior type of woman, showy and flighty

girls who aped their social betters and lived directly upon flattery; and among these a man like Keats would seek prettiness and expect nothing else. His poems show that he found nothing else.

Chapter Nine: Patronesses

THE least important and attractive relation of women to poets is, or was, that of patrons. The Duchess of Queensberry, a patron of Gay, got herself dismissed from the court of George II. by her zeal in asking subscriptions for the poet's prohibited opera, "Polly." He had before he was thirty been secretary or domestic steward to the Duchess of Monmouth and so found leisure to write "Rural Sports." Swift said that "any lady with a coach and six horses could carry him to Japan," and during his last twelve years the Queensberrys, in town and country, often gave him a life of comfort, plenty of rich food and no exercise, such as he desired. In the same way Thomas Nashe lived with Sir George Carey at Beddington, and dedicated to the wife and daughter of the house "Christ's Tears" and "Terrors of the Night." When Gay died the Duchess and Duke put up his monument in Westminster Abbey. So Mary Clifford, Countess of Dorset, gave to Drayton a bust and an inscription on black marble in the same place. Another Clifford, Anne, daughter of Spenser's Countess of Cumberland, erected a monument to Samuel Daniel at Beckington, near Devizes. In return for such present

and future advantages the poets wrote verses, not often their best, and prose in which their noble patronesses were called the "English Sappho" or "the true Octavia of our time," after the sister of Augustus and mother of Marcellus, who gave Virgil ten thousand sesterces for each of the verses about her dead son in the sixth book of the "Æneid." In a sonnet to the Lady Anne Harington, Drayton says precisely, "Your bounty bids my hand to make it known." Giles Fletcher tells the reader of his love sonnets, dedicated to Lady Molineux, that if he had not received unrequitable favours from her and good Sir Richard Molineux, he had not "thus idly toyed"; nor is it surprising to find amidst the sonnets to Licia, one on "the two twins and daughters of Lady Molineux, both passing like and exceeding fair."

It is seldom clear that patronesses had more to dispense than meat and wine and "sweet showers" of gold; as a rule only the ceremonious part of the intercourse has left its traces, and it may be that this often overshadowed the rest. We have no idea whether there was anything but well-founded politeness in Spenser's dedication of his hymns to Love and Beauty, and Heavenly Love and Heavenly Beauty, to Margaret Countess of Cumberland, and Mary Countess of War-

wick; but we do know that one of them moved him to recall, as being "fuller of the poison of strong passion than honey of honest delight," the hymns to profane Love and Beauty. Some of these great ladies may have been good judges of poetry, though, as M. Maulde la Clavière says, "as a rule Egerias have less need of a transcendent intellect than of an ample possession of good sense, tact, and above all, patience." At thirteen Lady Jane Grey read and spoke Greek, and was learning Hebrew at fifteen. The Marchioness of Winchester, for whom Jonson composed an elegy, wrote verses and knew Spanish, and was called by Howell an "exact model of female perfection." Sidney's sister, Lady Pembroke, was of the same rank as himself in mind and character: his niece, Lady Wroth, wrote prose and verse in her pastoral "Urania," and Jonson dedicated his "Alchemist" to her, and paid her extreme compliments of this kind:

> There's none so dull that for your style would ask,
> That saw you put on Pallas' plumèd casque. . . .

Another patroness of the day, the Countess of Rutland, he describes as making her books her friends—

> You make your books your friends,
> And study them unto the noblest ends,

Searching for knowledge, and to keep your mind
The same it was inspired, rich and refined.

Elizabeth of Bohemia, James the First's daughter, the theme of Wither, Heywood, Taylor, Campion, Donne, and above all, of Sir Henry Wotton, had an education which, combined with her natural spirit and generosity, made her fit to be the patron of greatest poets, as well as the mother of Rupert and the inspirer of the two hundred and forty-three gentlemen of Oxford who published "Epithalamia," in Greek, Latin, and Italian, upon her marriage with the Elector Palatine—an occasion which made the princess herself laugh out aloud, once at the bad French of the contract and once out of pure gaiety of heart. But I am unable to see the truth between Wotton's words when he says that the journey to Heidelberg gave Donne "a new life, by a true occasion of joy to be an eye-witness of the health of his most dear and most honoured mistress," the Queen of Bohemia. Donne sent her a sermon and a letter of sympathy when her party had suffered a heavy loss in war, and she replied in terms of impenetrable compliment.

One of the greatest patronesses of the age, Lucy, Countess of Bedford, was a friend of the Queen of Bohemia, sometimes her companion, often her correspondent on matters

of politics and the court. She wrote verses herself; she designed a garden which Sir William Temple thought the most perfect he had ever seen; she collected medals and pictures; she was, says Mr. E. K. Chambers, "a woman of considerable and varied learning"; and her nature was magnificent in its extravagance. Daniel wrote poetical epistles to her and dedicated to her his "Vision of Twelve Goddesses." Jonson, in sending her Donne's satires, called her:

> Lucy, you brightness of our sphere, who are
> Life of the Muses' day, their morning star!

Drayton's Muse, he said himself, would have been left orphan had not the Countess taken the place of Sir Henry Goodere in what Mr. Elton calls the "series of honourable dependences." He addressed her in a prefatory sonnet to his "Endimion and Phœbe" in this manner:

> Great Lady, essence of my chiefest good,
> Of the most pure and finest temper'd spirit,
> Adorn'd with gifts, ennobled by thy blood,
> Which by descent true virtue dost inherit;
> That virtue which no fortune can deprive,
> Which thou by birth tak'st from thy gracious mother,
> Whose royal minds with equal motion strive
> Which most in honour shall excel the other

Unto thy fame my Muse herself shall task,
Which rain'st upon me thy sweet golden showers,
And, but thy self, no subject will I ask,
Upon whose praise my soul shall spend her powers.
Sweet Lady, then, grace this poor Muse of mine,
Whose faith, whose zeal, whose life, whose all is thine.

And his compliments to her in verse and prose extend evenly and fairly thickly over twelve years. He and Donne, Jonson, Daniel, and others attended what Mr. Gosse calls the "graceful and brilliant little court" which she held at Twickenham Park between 1608 and 1618. Her hospitality was princely, and Donne could say to her:

The mine, the magazine, the common-weal,
The story of beauty, in Twickenham is, and you.
Who hath seen one, would both; as, who had been
In Paradise, would seek the cherubim.

Her first meeting with Donne may have been her visit to him at Mitcham in 1608. "For the rest of her life," says Mr. Gosse perhaps too easily, "she was his patron, inspiration, and support." In the same year Donne speaks of "that favour which my Lady Bedford hath afforded me of giving her name" [Lucy] "to my daughter"; he also mentions "going to sup with my Lady Bedford." Supper with her may or may not have meant the friendly meal at which Lord

Rutland found his Countess and Ben Jonson together and accused her of keeping a table for poets. Donne called his patroness his "best lady," and, in a letter asking for some verses which she had written about himself, "happiest and worthiest lady." He told her that she alone could "cast the fetters of verse" upon his "free meditations"; and that she had refined him "to worthiest things—virtue, art, beauty, fortune"; and he spoke of her as one "for whose body God made better clay, or took souls' stuff." But as we know how Donne could write of a young woman whom he had never seen, but whose father gave him lodging, we cannot be sure how to translate these compliments. When the Countess' cousin, Lady Markham, died at Twickenham, he wrote an elegy upon her, after being prompted apparently by one who reminded him what he owed to her; he said that she was meet

> To have reform'd this forward heresy,
> That women can no parts of friendship be. . . .

He wrote another for another cousin, Miss Cecil Bulstrode, doubtless describing "the idea of a Woman, and not as she was," to use the defence of his "Anniversary" on Miss Drury; for a very different account was written of her by Jonson in her lifetime.

Donne wrote an elegy also on Lady Bedford's brother, Lord Harington. When he had written his "Anatomy of the World" on the death of Miss Drury, he began, but never finished, a letter to appease the Countess for his extravagant praise of the other: and yet he had written of the Countess herself in terms as harmless as those in which publishers praise their books and auctioneers their properties. When he was about to enter the Church in 1614 he appears to have expected Lady Bedford to help pay his debts. She had, however, been involved in a Chancery suit and gave only £30, and he spoke of being brought to the necessity of dedicating his poems to the Earl of Somerset, though evidently conscious that this would or ought to offend her. Next year he implies that she had too good a memory of his past life and is more suspicious of his new calling than he had thought "her nobility could have admitted," and he plainly says that in the past an elegy had moved her to "so much compassion as to offer to pay his debts," but now his greater wants "work no farther" than to procure £30. Another patroness, the Countess of Huntingdon, relieved him generously at this moment, and he speaks of reserving all his verses and "thoughts of women's worthiness" for her, and not Lady

Bedford, with this condition that his correspondent is not to show her the verses if "too bad or too good, over or under her understanding." For many years he paid the new Countess compliments and begged a friend to say that she was named in his letters even when she was not. Of his letters to Lady Bedford none bears the certain imprint of more than flattery except where he ceases to address her, and then he sometimes pays her the highest of all compliments, that of writing his best and in perfect freedom. Few can agree with Mr. Gosse when he says:

> There is always the little touch of awe, of sacred wonder, which keeps his impassioned addresses dignified and pure. He worships her; his heart is beating in his hands; but he never forgets that this divine and crystal creature is not made for earthly love.

Most will prefer the tone of Jonson's addresses to her:

Madam, I told you late how I repented,
  I asked a lord a buck, and he denied me;
And, ere I could ask you, I was prevented,
  For your most noble offer had supplied me.
Straight went I home; and there, most like a poet,
  I fancied to myself, what wine, what wit
I would have spent; how every Muse should know it,
  And Phœbus' self should be at eating it.
O Madam, if your grant did thus transfer me,
Make it your gift! See whither that will bear me.

Here, by frankly accepting the practical value of the relation he makes even that amiable and, what is more, he implies by his freedom that it was not the only side.

Jonson's many complimentary epistles help us to set probably the right low value upon each one. Though he did his duty with polite and, if quite decorous, yet also transparent excess, he did not as a rule attribute to the bounteous lady what was only in the first instance due to her sustaining meat and her stimulating wine. But a notable example to the contrary is his set of poems "left to posterity of that truly noble lady, the Lady Venetia Digby." This was that most renowned beauty, Venetia Stanley, whose father vainly tried to seclude her in her girlhood. As Aubrey says, "the young eagles had espied her," and she came to London. There it was written over her lodging one night

> Pray come not near,
> For Dame Venetia Stanley lodgeth here,

so many and so noble were her lovers. "She had," says Aubrey, "a most lovely and sweet-turn'd face, delicate darke-browne haire. She had a perfect healthy constitution; strong; good skin; well-proportioned; much enclining to a *Bona Roba* (near altogether). Her face, a short ovall; dark-browne eie-browe,

about which much sweetness, as also in the opening of her eie-lidds. The colour of her cheekes was just that of the damaske rose, which is neither too hott nor too pale. She was of a just stature, not very tall." At length she married Sir Kenelm Digby, that man than whom "no man became grandeur better." He is said to have fed her on capons fattened with adders to preserve her beauty. He had her portrait painted several times, and casts made of her hands, her feet, and her face. She was thirty-three when she died in 1633, leaving behind her three sons and a husband who sorrowed for her in long mourning cloak, high crowned hat, and beard unshorn, like a hermit, and to her memory erected a sumptuous monument which the Great Fire destroyed. Digby was one of Jonson's "sons," and he and his wife were patrons of the poet. Jonson called her his Muse and said of her:

> 'Twere time that I died too, now she is dead,
> Who was my Muse, and life of all I said;
> The spirit that I wrote with, and conceived;
> All that was good, or great with me, she weaved,
> And set it forth.

Considering the woman, her beauty, her fame, the piety of her married life and her early death, the character of her majestic and

brilliant husband, his pompous mourning, the verses in her honour are admirable and perhaps the finest written by a poet strictly to and about his patron; as, for example, "The picture of the body" beginning:

> Sitting, and ready to be drawn,
> What make these velvets, silks, and lawn,
> Embroideries, feathers, fringes, lace,
> Where every limb takes like a face? . . .

Verses like these are a fitting gorgeous part of the ceremonies of death in a ceremonious age, and no one was more worthy to be the Muse of such poetry than Venetia Digby. In a time when the world of letters was one not yet overgrown family, when learning was a link between the learned and the nobility, when a feudal relation between man and man was not singular, the patron was natural and all but necessary, and the womanhood of the patroness could add a grace to patronage and her office a dignity to womanhood. Poets must feel somehow or another a kindling response in the world outside them—even Shelley gave signs of distress for lack of it—and to find it in their own circle, among the great and the fair, was perhaps to gain a social quality for poetry which has latterly been weakened, and to make for the simplicity of their position, since the vast unintelligible

and uncontrollable public, save for the dramatist, was as yet unborn. Patron and patroness did also some service by adding the colour of their opulence and ostentation to the poet's material. With the decay of a feudal style the patron who depended on wealth or social position ceased to exist. One of the last was Lady Hertford, a gentle and generous, country-loving woman who wrote verses, and every summer invited a poet to Marlborough Castle, "to hear her verses and assist her studies," and among them James Thomson; in her house and with her encouragement he probably wrote the poem, "Spring," which he afterwards dedicated to her. Lady Hertford was the "advocate of rank too great to be rejected unheard, and of virtue too eminent to be heard without being believed," who successfully interposed with the Queen in 1728 on behalf of Richard Savage, then under sentence of death for killing a man in a brothel. But the later activities of patrons—in the cases of Crabbe and Rutland, Clare and Northampton—have served no purpose except to make the relation contemptible. Dependence upon several thousand people is no pleasanter or more ennobling than dependence on one: but there is no longer a choice. There remains now the relation between mild

kings and queens without power or responsibility and poetic subjects who can expect from their adulation nothing but meaningless condescension and a place which makes, and is made, absurd. This relation can still produce nonsense less impious than Ben Jonson's "Hail, Mary, full of grace" addressed to Queen Henrietta Maria, less amusing than the comparison of Queen Anne to the sun, though not less ridiculous than either; but it has become as incapable of evil as of good, and the folly is individual and no longer to be sheltered by convention.

Index

"AGLAURA," 259
Anne, Queen, 345
Anthea, 252
Armour, Jean, 288, 289, 290
Asclepiades, 31
Astrophel (*see* Sir Philip Sidney)
Aubrey, John, 138, 253, 255, 256, 341
Austen, Lady, 171–175, 177
Aylmer, Rose, 295, 296, 300

BAILEY, J. C., 166, 173, 174, 179
Baillie, Lesley, 23 *et seq.*, 292
Ballads, 7 *et seq.*, 68 *et seq.*
Barbauld, A. L., 54
Barnard, Lady Anne, 55
Baroni, Leonora, 164
Barry, Elizabeth, 269
Beaufort, Joan, 109 *et seq.*
Beaumont, Lady, 193
Bedford, Lucy, Countess of, 335–340
Begbie, Ellison, 287
Behn, Aphra, 50
Beowulf, 135, 136
Biese, Alfred, 66
Blake, Mrs. (mother of poet), 129, 130
Blake, Mrs. (wife), 182–185
Blake, William, 95, 129, 182–188
Blount, Sir Charles, 235
"Bluestockings," 185
Bodham, Mrs. (*see* Anne Donne)
Bohemia, Elizabeth, Queen of, 335
Boinville, Mrs., 204
Boyle, Elizabeth, 140, 141
Bradley, A. C., 238
Brawne, Fanny, 37, 321–5, 328
Brock, A. Clutton, 224, 226
Brooke, Frances, 60
Browne, Sir Thomas, 162
Browne, William, 129
Browning, Robert, 92, 93, 178, 295, 303
Buckle, Henry Thomas, 51
Bulstrode, Cecil, 338
Burns, Gilbert, 287
Burns, Robert, 22 *et seq.*, 285–294, 302, 303, 315, 317
Byron, Lady, 306–308
Byron, Lord, 4, 33, 34, 79, 207, 300, 303–315

CAMPBELL, Mary, 289
Campion, Thomas, 115–117
Carew, Thomas, 260–262
Carleton, Lady, 260
Carleton, Sir Dudley, 260
Carlisle, Countess of, 260, 271
Castiglione, 7
Celia, 261
Chambers, E. K., 9 *et seq.*, 146, 336
Chandler, Mary, 60
Chapone, Hester, 62
Charmian (*see* Jane Cox)
Chatterton, Thomas, 130, 281–285, 318
Chaucer, Geoffrey, 110, 111, 122, 137, 228–231
Chaworth, Mary Anne, 304, 305, 307, 311
Chloe, 273, 285

Chloris, 291
Clairmont, Claire, 206–213, 216, 221, 226, 303, 308
Clare, John, 34, 66, 80 *et seq.*, 87, 105 *et seq.*, 148, 344
Clarinda, 286, 289
Clifford, Anne, 332
Clifford, Mary, 332
Cockburn, Catharine, 55
Cogni, Margarita, 308, 313
Coleridge, E. H., 308
Coleridge, S. T., 31 *et seq.*, 46, 47, 56, 89, 141, 188, 190, 204
Collins, Anne, 57
Colvin, Sidney, 297, 302
Cowley, Abraham, 271
Cowley, Hannah, 53
Cowper, Harriet (*see* Lady Hesketh)
Cowper, Theodora, 165, 166, 179
Cowper, William, 88, 95, 120–122, 164–181
Cox, Bessy, 277
Cox, Jane, 319, 321
Crabbe, George, 130, 344
Crashaw, Richard, 262–265
Crew, Lady, 252
Cumberland, Margaret, Countess of, 332, 333

DALILAH (*Samson Agonistes*), 163
Daniel, Samuel, 336
Danvers, Jane (*see* Mrs. Jane Herbert)
Davies, William H., 89
Davis, Miss, 154
De Sélincourt, Basil, 183
Devonshire, Georgiana, Duchess of, 56
Digby, Lady Venetia, 341–343
Digby, Sir Kenelm, 342
Donne, Anne (wife of poet), 145–150
Donne, Anne (Mrs. Bodham), 120, 124, 165
Donne, Elizabeth, 165
Donne, John, 108, 121, 126, 127, 145–150, 153, 240–246, 255, 286, 326, 335, 337
Donne, Mrs. (mother of the poet), 124
Doughty, Charles M., 119, 178
Dowden, Edward, 202
Drayton, Michael, 100 *et seq.*, 108, 123, 332
Drummond, Sir William, 262
Drury, Elizabeth, 149, 150, 245, 338, 339
Drury, Thorn, 271
Dunlop, Mrs., 290

EDGECUMBE, Richard, 305
Egerton, Lady Alice, 159
Elton, Oliver, 100, 336
Euripides, 1, 3
Eve (*Paradise Lost*), 159 *et seq.*, 298

FEILDING, Susan, Countess of Denbigh, 265
Finch, Anne (*see* Countess of Winchelsea)
Fitton, Mary, 74, 238, 239
Fletcher, Giles, 97, 333

GAY, John, 280, 332
Geraldine, 232–234
Gisborne, Maria, 209, 217

Godwin, Mary (*see* Mary Shelley)
Goodere, Anne, 100, 103
Gosse, Edmund, 124, 127, 146, 241, 337, 340
Gray, Dorothy, 129
Gray, Thomas, 129, 272, 280
Greensleeves, 113–115
Greg, W. W., 159
Grey, Lady Jane, 334
Grove, Harriet, 200
Guiccioli, Countess, 309

HARINGTON, Lady Anne, 333
Harington, Lord, 339
Harris, Frank, 94, 238, 239
Hay, Lucy (*see* Countess of Carlisle)
Hayley, William, 178, 179
Hemans, Felicia, 200
Henley, W. E., 287, 288
Henrietta Maria, Queen, 345
Herbert, Edward, Lord Cherbury, 104, 124, 125, 128, 150, 260
Herbert, George, 124, 126, 127, 151–154
Herbert, Magdalen (*see* Newport)
Herbert, Mary, Countess of Pembroke, 137–139, 334
Herbert, Mrs. Jane, 151–154
Herbert, William, Earl of Pembroke, 139, 240
Herrick, Robert, 87, 88, 247, 253
Hertford, Lady, 344
Hesketh, Lady, 120, 165–171, 175, 177
Heywood, Eliza, 53
Hinton, James, 188
Hitchener, Elizabeth, 201–203
Horton, Anne Beatrix, 313
Howard, Frances, Lady Rochester, 149
Hoyland, Eleanor, 283
Huntingdon, Countess of, 339
Husband's Message, 136
Hussey, Margaret, 231
Hutchinson, Mary (*see* Mary Wordsworth)
Hutchinson, Sarah, 195
Hygd, Queen, 136

"IANTHE," 296, 297
Ingram, John H., 281
Ione, 296

JAMES I, King of Scotland, 109 *et seq.*
Jefferies, Richard, 7, 67
Johnson, Samuel, 268, 270, 272, 278, 279
Jonson, Ben, 334, 336, 338, 340–342, 344
Joyce, Mary, 105 *et seq.*
Julia, 249

KEATS, Georgiana, 316, 320
Keats, John, 22, 35 *et seq.*, 102, 133, 134, 316–331
Keats, Mrs. Frances, 133, 134
Keats, Thomas, 318
Killigrew, Anne, 49
King, Mrs., 181
Knight, Professor William, 192

LA CLAVIÈRE, Maulde, 61, 334
Lamartine, 80
Lamb, Charles, 22, 105
Lamb, Lady Caroline, 307, 308

Lancaster, Blanche, Duchess of, 230, 231
Landor, Mrs. (mother of poet), 131, 134
Landor, Mrs. (wife of poet), 297, 298
Landor, W. S., 92, 131, 294–303
Leapor, Mary, 61
Lecky, W. E., 2
Leigh, Augusta, 305, 306, 310, 313
Ley, Lady Margaret, 154, 163
Linton, Eliza Lynn (*see* Eliza Lynn)
Lodge, Thomas, 98, 99
Lorimer, Miss, 291
Luxborough, Lady, 61
Lynn, Eliza, 295, 298

MACKAIL, J. W., translations from *Greek Anthology* (quoted) 3, 4
McLehose, Mrs., 286
Maeterlinck, Maurice, 71
Magdalen, Mary, 263, 265
Markham, Lady, 338
Marlowe, Christopher, 78, 123
Marston, John, 123
Maxwell, Andrew, 267, 268
Medwin, Thomas, 45, 210, 214
Meredith, George, 306
Meynell, Mrs. Alice, 87
Milbanke, Anna Isabella (*see* Lady Byron)
Milton, John, 20, 21, 154–164, 255, 298
Milton, Mrs. Catharine, 156
Milton, Mrs. Elizabeth, 157
Milton, Mrs. Mary, 154, 155
Minshull, Elizabeth (*see* Mrs. Elizabeth Milton)
Molandi, Madame de (*see Ianthe*)
Molineux, Lady, 333
Monk, Mary, 321
Montagu, Mary Wortley, 51, 306
Moorman, F. W., 248
More, Anne (*see* Anne Donne)
More, Hannah, 56
Morpeth, Mary, 50
Mountcashell, Lady, 45, 209–210

NASHE, Thomas, 123
Neæra, 297
Newcastle, Margaret, 109
Newport, Magdalen, 124–128, 134
Newton, Mrs. John, 181

O'NEILL, Henrietta, Lady, 58
Otway, Thomas, 269, 270, 280

PARK, Anne, 289
Parsons, Thomasen, 247
Paton, Elizabeth, 288
Pattison, Mark, 155
Pembroke, Countess of (*see* Mary Herbert)
Pennell, Isabell, 232
Pennington, Miss or Mrs., 62
Pepys, 113
Perilla, 250
Perenna, 250
Petrarch, 233, 245
Phillips, Katharine, 57, 59
Poe, Edgar Allan, 19
Pope, Alexander, 105, 128, 280
Pope, Mrs. (mother), 128

Powell, Mary (*see* Mary Milton)
Prior, Matthew, 268, 272, 273, 277–280, 301, 329

QUEENSBERRY, Duchess of, 332

RANELAGH, Lady, 155
Reynolds, John Hamilton, 317
Rich, Lord, 237
Rich, Penelope, Lady (*see Stella*)
Riddell, Mrs., 290, 291
Robertson, J. M., 239
Robinson, Mary, 58
Rochester, Robert Carr, Viscount, 149
Rochester, John Wilmot, Earl of, 269, 270
Rossetti, D. G., 36, 326
Rossetti, W. M., 36
Rousseau, J. J., 79, 312, 330
Rowe, Elizabeth, 58
Rutland, Countess of, 334, 338
Rutland, Duke of, 344

SACHARISSA, 270–271
Sampson, John, 184
Sappho, 239
Savage, Richard, 344
Schopenhauer, 137
Schuré, M. Edouard, 6
Segati, Marianna, 308
Seward, Anna, 62
Shakespeare, 50, 74–76, 93–95, 102, 104, 113, 123, 147, 238–240, 286, 303
Shelley, Elizabeth, 199
Shelley, Harriet, 201–206, 207, 218, 224–226
Shelley, Hellen, 199
Shelley, Mary, 43, 205–227
Shelley, Mrs. (mother of poet), 130
Shelley, Percy Bysshe, 38 *et seq.*, 66, 67, 68, 77, 78, 130, 131, 188, 199–227, 234
Sheridan, Frances, 57
Sidney, Lady Dorothea (*see Sacharissa*)
Sidney, Lady Mary, 123, 134
Sidney, Sir Philip, 65, 123, 137–140, 179, 235–237
Simmons, Anne, 105
Skeat, W. W., 112
Skelton, John, 231, 232
Smith, Charlotte, 57, 59, 62
Smith, Goldwin, 176
Smith, J. C., 140
Spenser, Edmund, 77, 78, 122, 140–145
Stanley, Venetia (*see* Lady Digby)
Stapleton, Miss, 18
Stella (Esther Johnson), 54, 274–277
Stella (Penelope Rich), 65, 139, 235–237, 285
Sterne, Lawrence, 65
Suckling, Sir John, 52, 253–260, 282
Surrey, Countess of, 231–232
Surrey, Earl of, 232–234
Swift, Jonathan, 54, 55, 274–277, 280, 332
Swift, Sophia Jane (*see Ianthe*)
Sylvander, 286, 289
Symonds, J. A., 137, 234, 237
Symons, Arthur, 315

TEMPLE, Sir William, 336
Teresa, Saint, 262

Thompson, A. H., 257
Thomson, Catharine, 155
Thomson, James, 268–279, 344
Thrytho, Queen, 136
Thuilliar, Julia (*see* Mrs. Landor)
Thyrza, 305, 306
Tighe, Mary, 54
Tollet, Elizabeth, 53
Turner, Cornelia, 204, 205

UNWIN, Mrs., 171, 174–179

"VANESSA" (Esther Vanhomrigh), 274
Vaughan, Henry, 265–267
Vere, Lady Frances, 232
Vincent, Arthur, 260
Virgil, 78
Vivian, Percival, 115
Viviani, Emilia, 213–217

WALLER, Edmund, 270 271, 279, 299
Walsingham, Frances, 139, 235
Waltheow, Queen, 135
Walton, Izaak, 146, 151, 241, 243
Warwick, Mary, Countess of, 333
Webster, Lady Frances Wedderburn, 308
Westbrook, Eliza, 203, 204
Westbrook, Harriet (*see* Harriet Shelley)
Wharton, Marchioness of, 60
Wheeler, Stephen, 296
Wife's Complaint, 136
Wilkinson, Thomas, 70
Williams, Jane, 45, 212, 213, 223
Winchelsea, Countess of, 58, 60
Winchester, Marchioness of, 334
Woodcock, Catharine (*see* Mrs. Catharine Milton)
Worcester, Earl of, his daughters, 145
Wordsworth, Dorothy, 26 *et seq.*, 32, 33, 188–195, 198
Wordsworth, Mary, 193–195
Wordsworth, Mrs. Anne, 131–134
Wordsworth, William, 26 *et seq.*, 32, 33, 188–195, 198
Wotton, Sir Henry, 335
Wroth, Lady, 334

YOUNG, Elizabeth, 280

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY
BERKELEY

Return to desk from which borrowed.
This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

APR 28 1948

FEB 7 1955
JAN 4 1955 LU

20Apr'64DY

REC'D LD
APR 6'64-1 PM

JAN 11 1966 69
REC'D LD
JAN 7'66-12 M

APR 27 1992
AUTO. DISC.
APR 06 1992
CIRCULATION

JUL 01 1993
AUTO DISC CIRC MAY 26 '93

SEP 04 1995

RECEIVED
JAN 23 1995
CIRCULATION DEPT.

21-100m-9,'47(A5702s16)476

U.C. BERKELEY LIBRARIES
C021112587

270628

905
T455

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY